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## **The pneumatology of Thomas Goodwin.**

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# The Pneumatology of Thomas Goodwin

by Paul Blackham

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF  
KING'S COLLEGE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON AND OF THE  
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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In this thesis I examine the Pneumatology of Thomas Goodwin under four headings: the Trinity; epistemology; soteriology; and ecclesiology. This examination is self-consciously under the discipline of systematic theology rather than historical theology or history of doctrine. This decision has been made because of a desire not only to take Goodwin seriously as a theologian of the Church, but also to bring his theology into conversation with the contemporary Pneumatological debates.

Thomas Goodwin was the first systematizer of congregational ecclesiology. Such ecclesiology, in the hands of Goodwin, throws strong emphasis on the sovereign, personal work of the Spirit in the worshipping community. Particular attention is given to this aspect of Goodwin's work to discover what theological resources he offers to the persistently lively discussions of modern ecclesiology.

Churches in every part of the world have been influenced by variously named movements that find their common ground in an emphasis on the "immediate" work of the Spirit. Thomas Goodwin's insistence upon the "immediate" work of the Spirit, even in his consideration of justification, has been a point of reference for a variety of Church leaders in the past 300 years, including John and Charles Wesley. However, Goodwin strongly resisted the radical Pneumatology of the Separatists. Therefore the relationship between the subjective work of the Spirit and the objective work of Christ in his theology is investigated.

In this research I propose to demonstrate that the fertile Pneumatology of the 17th Century finds expression in Thomas Goodwin in such a way that

**the Person and Work of the Spirit are integrated into the Person and Work of Christ in a strikingly valuable way.**



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## Introduction

### 1. Goodwin as a Theologian

Thomas Goodwin is a highly neglected theologian, yet his influence upon the Independent churches is second to none. His leadership of the Independent party at the Westminster Assembly won him respect from even the fiercest Presbyterians, as is evidenced in Robert Baillie's letters and journals.

His work encompasses twelve densely packed volumes of deep, thorough and experimental systematic thought. John Wesley prepared two volumes of Goodwin in his series of essential texts for his local preachers in the early days of Methodism. Traces of the influence of Goodwin can be found in preachers and theologians down through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, he is little read and there is an almost complete absence of secondary literature.

This neglect can be accounted for partly by the difficulty of reading Goodwin. His sentences are long, complex and wide-ranging. His metaphors can be quite obscure, requiring careful thought before his intention can be appreciated. His exegetical work is intricate, profound and thorough to the point of excess. He has not been published in a complete edition since 1861, and that edition has small print that is demanding on the reader.

However, those who have persevered and over-come the obstacles are often full of the highest praise for Goodwin. Alexander Whyte, the nineteenth century Scottish divine, is perhaps chief among them.

On opening the *Witness* newspaper one propitious morning my eye fell on the announcement of a new edition of Thomas Goodwin's works. I entered my name at once as a subscriber to the series, and not long after the first volume of *Goodwin's Works* came into my hands. And I will here say with simple truth that his Works have never been out of my hands down to this day. In those far-off years I read my Goodwin every Sabbath morning and every Sabbath night....

The works of Dickens and Thackeray were then appearing in monthly parts. The Bronte family were at their best. George Eliot was writing in *Blackwood*. Carlyle was at the height of his influence and renown. Ruskin, Macaulay, Tennyson, and Browning were in everybody's hands. And I read them all as I had time and opportunity. But I read none of them all as I read Goodwin.<sup>1</sup>

Whyte described Goodwin as the greatest pulpit exegete of Paul that has ever lived.<sup>2</sup> Whyte prepared a remarkable index to the Works of Goodwin, which is appended to volume twelve of the Nichol series. It includes an index of some ten thousand Biblical verses and a painstakingly thorough subject index.<sup>3</sup>

Whyte reaches new heights of praise in a letter:

I am moved, nay compelled, to-night to write to you to suggest that you make Goodwin viii the subject of the next 'Whyte Prize Essay.' What do you say to that? If you are not possessed with viii. as I am you will not agree with my suggestion; but if you are, you will. I cannot put into words to-night, even to you, my feelings about Goodwin. Take him, and go through viii. again, and let me have your mind. My feeling is that two or three of your ablest and best men mastering Goodwin might transform the Scottish pulpit. Such preaching will alone rally Scotland

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<sup>1</sup> G.F. Barbour, *The Life of Alexander Whyte*, p.82 (London, 1925).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p97

<sup>3</sup> I have included a rather more modest index of people who Goodwin refers to or quotes as an appendix to this work.

round the pulpit, as it rallied Oxford around Goodwin's pulpit to his eightieth year. I wish I were young again to preach nothing else. Indeed, there is nothing else worth preaching!<sup>4</sup>

P.T. Forsyth was another enthusiast for Goodwin. He rarely mentions people in his writings, and is even more spartan with his praise, but Goodwin is both mentioned and praised. In The Principle of Authority, Forsyth ranks Goodwin alongside Augustine, Athanasius and Hooker.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. The Life of Thomas Goodwin

Goodwin was born in 1600 in the Norfolk village of Rollesby, and entered Christ's College Cambridge in 1613. During his early childhood he had been very affected by spiritual issues, but during his university residence he became less concerned with such things. He was impressed with the eloquent and popular preaching of Dr Senhouse, and gave himself to imitating these "flaunting sermons".

In a memoir, John Goodwin records his father's experience of this time:

all this time he walked in the vanity of his mind; and ambitious designs and hopes entirely possessing him, all his aim was to get applause, to raise his reputation, and in any way to advance himself by preferments. But God, who had destined him to higher ends than what he had projected in his own thoughts, was graciously pleased to change his heart, and to turn the course of his life to his own service and glory.<sup>6</sup>

This change of heart was a definite and sudden experience for Goodwin, which in many ways became the theme of his theological work for the rest of his life. He had not experienced this change when he went to

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p.625

<sup>5</sup> See pp. 272-273 of that work.

<sup>6</sup> John Goodwin, A Memoir of Dr Thomas Goodwin, Vol.II of the Works of Goodwin, p. li. (Edinburgh, 1861)

Catherine Hall in 1619, although it is hard to see why he chose this college. It was academically far inferior to Christ's College, and it was strongly evangelical, which would not have impressed him at all at that time. It seems most likely that he sought academic promotion in a Hall where scholars were rare. In 1620 he commenced his M.A. and was chosen Fellow and lecturer in the Hall.

It was in that year that he heard a funeral sermon that made him deeply concerned about his personal relationship with God. He felt that he was under the impact of a mighty power, and he became profoundly aware of his various sins. He went through a seven year long inner striving concerning his spiritual state before a Holy God. In later years he said that he spent this time desperately searching for signs of grace within himself. Eventually he found peace under the counsel of a puritan minister of King's Lynn called Mr Price. He told Goodwin to look simply and directly to Christ who had died for his sins and had risen for his justification, ever living to make intercession for him. Goodwin became gripped by the idea of Christ as the Second Adam. As he had received guilt and inherent corruption from Adam, so he must receive righteousness and inherent holiness from Christ. These themes emerge time and time again throughout his theological writings.

His experience of the Spirit was of critical importance for his theology. He was overcome with the sense of God dealing with him. He did not feel that he was co-operating with the Spirit, but rather that the Spirit worked upon him in a slow, gradual process. Goodwin's son writes that his father became a Calvinist because he found that his own experience of God was described by the Synod of Dort.

He describes his own experience of this time:

God having proceeded thus far, I perceived I was 'humbled under his mighty hand' as James speaks, with whom only and immediately I had to do, and not with my own bare, single thoughts. But God continued orderly to possess my thoughts with further progress as to this subject; I being made sensible of God's hand in it, and myself was merely passive: but still God continued his hand over me, and held me, intent to consider and pierce into what should be the first causes of so much actual sinfulness; and he presented to me in answer thereunto, - for it was transacted as a conference by God with me,- the original corruption of my nature, and inward evil constitution and depravation of all my faculties; the inclinations and dispositions of heart unto all evil, and averseness from all spiritual good and acceptableness unto God. I was convinced that in this respect I was flesh, which was to my apprehension as if that had been the definition of a man, 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh.'<sup>7</sup>

His experience of the peace he found, under the guidance of Mr Price, is similarly significant for his later theology.

In this plight was my soul, dead in sins and trespasses from my nativity,... together with that heap of actual sins, that were the continual ebullitions of original sin. And no eye pitied me, or could help me, but as God there in Ezek. xvi., on the sudden... was pleased.. as it were in an instant, to alter the whole of his former dispensation towards me, and said of and to my soul, Yea, live; yea, live, I say, said God: and as he created the world and the matter of all things by a word, so he created and put a new life and spirit into my soul, and so great an alteration was strange to me.<sup>8</sup>

Goodwin describes at length his experience of regeneration, of how the sudden radical change of nature was the answer to all his previous concerns. He compares his experience with that of Augustine.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. lvi

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. lxi

We will see that in Goodwin there is a deep struggle to give theological expression to his own experience. He grapples with the doctrine of justification over and over again from many different perspectives in order to see justification as the true answer to all his problems of guilt and nature. There is a constant movement from justification as an alien righteousness giving a forensic status of righteousness, to justification as an alien righteousness made natural by the Holy Spirit in the absolute change of regeneration. Yet this movement is by no means a straight line. Goodwin is always aware of the need to maintain the absoluteness of the Reformation statement of justification, but to also integrate into that model the reality of the absolute and incorruptible quality of the Spirit's work of regeneration.

In 1625 Goodwin became a licensed preacher of the university, thus submitting to the discipline and standards of the Anglican Church. He was appointed lecturer at Trinity Church, a post which had previously been occupied by Sibbes and Preston. Although the Bishop of Ely tried to get him to promise not to preach on controversial subjects, Goodwin refused this limitation. In 1630 he took the B.D. degree and in 1632 he was made vicar of Trinity Church. However, he resigned this post in 1633 in favour of Sibbes, and in 1634 he resigned his academic positions due to interference from the Bishop of Ely.

He was married to Elizabeth Prescott in 1638, although she died after just a few years. At this time he went to Holland, along with many others who were coming to an Independent ecclesiology. He lived at first in Amsterdam, but moved to Arnheim where he ministered to a congregation of about 100. Here he developed a friendship with Philip Nye, where they spent their time developing a theology of church order and discipline, not content with the strict separatism of Brown. Goodwin and Nye travelled to Rotterdam to bring about



a peaceful solution to the question of "private prophesyings" that threatened to split the Independent churches.

When the Long Parliament dealt with Laud, Goodwin returned to London, where he began an Independent Church in the Parish of St. Dunstan's-in-the-East. He remained there for about ten years, until in 1650 he was appointed to the post of president of Magdalen College, Oxford. During his time in London he had become a respected preacher, and had been invited to preach to the House of Commons on several occasions.

In 1643 Goodwin, along with his friends Nye, Burroughs, Bridge and Simpson, was appointed to the Westminster Assembly. Goodwin is frequently referred to as the leader of the Independent party. "Nye was a powerful speaker, Burroughs an acute reasoner, Bridge a persuasive pleader, but Goodwin was the strength of the party."<sup>9</sup>

In 1644 Goodwin and Nye published Cotton's ecclesiastical treatise, adding a preface in which they put forward their own views.

In 1649 Goodwin and Owen preached before Cromwell and his parliament, and on the following day both were recommended to be Heads of Oxford Colleges. In 1653 Goodwin received the degree of D.D. In 1658 the Savoy Declaration was published, which Goodwin had spent a great deal of time and energy upon.

At the Restoration Goodwin felt that he could no longer maintain his work in Oxford, and in 1660 he left the university and settled in London. The

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. xxviii

members of his Oxford congregation followed him to London where he continued to minister to them. He remained in London throughout the plague and the Great Fire. Only his theological books survived the great fire, which Goodwin took to be divine guidance pointing him to exclusively theological study for the rest of his life.

On his death bed Goodwin confessed, full of assurance, that he had 'the whole righteousness of Christ', a phrase which throughout his works he had used to sum up the active, passive and ontological righteousness of Christ. The lifelong theological task of articulating the content of the righteousness of Christ had reached a timely conclusion in Goodwin's mind.

Goodwin reasoned from his own experience; Owen from his critical and devout knowledge of Scripture; Baxter from the fitness of things. Goodwin and Owen are valuable expositors; but Goodwin well interpreted Scripture by the insight of a renewed heart -Owen, distrusting his own experience, by the patient and prayerful study of words and phrases.<sup>10</sup>

With that cautionary word we begin our study of Goodwin's Pneumatology with an examination of the place of the Spirit in Goodwin's conception of the Trinity, before we move onto the Spirit's work in general epistemology. This will leave us wellplaced to appreciate the Spirit's work in Goodwin's soteriology, which leads naturally on to the Spirit's work in Goodwin's ecclesiology.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. xlvii

## Chapter 1

### The Holy Spirit in the Trinity

"There is a general omission in the saints of God, in their not giving the Holy Ghost that glory that is due to his person, and for his great work of salvation in us, insomuch that we have in our hearts almost lost this third person"<sup>11</sup>. This is how Goodwin begins his large treatise on the Spirit's work in salvation. It has become an almost obligatory introduction to any writing on the work of the Spirit!

We begin our examination of Goodwin's Pneumatology with an examination of the Spirit's place in the Trinity. We do this because it will provide a framework into which the rest of the material can be placed. The crucial decisions in any Pneumatology are made in the doctrine of the Trinity.

#### 1. The Filioque

Goodwin's apparent commitment to the double procession is spelt out on the very first page of his work on the Spirit: "The Holy Ghost is indeed the last in the order of the persons, as proceeding from the other two, yet in the participation of the Godhead he is equal with them both; and in his work, though it be last done for us, he is not behind them, nor in the glory of it inferior to what they have in theirs."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The Works of Thomas Goodwin, DD in the Nichol's Series of Standard divines. Puritan Period (Edinburgh, from 1861 to 1866). Volume 6 The Work of the Holy Ghost in our Salvation p.3. Hereafter I will simply refer to the Volume number and page from these collected works, unless it is otherwise stated.

<sup>12</sup> Vol.6, p.3.

However, Goodwin is very hard to pin down with any final certainty on this question. He repeatedly agrees with the classic Western view of the Spirit ontologically proceeding from the Father and the Son. He can give the Spirit the title of *vinculum Trinitatis*, "the union of the Father and the Son, as proceeding from both by way of love".<sup>13</sup>

Goodwin also makes the standard point that because Jesus claims the authority to send the Spirit, a promise that had been the promise of the Father alone, then we can conclude that the Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as the Father.<sup>14</sup>

Showing that love is basic to the Spirit's Person, Goodwin uses Augustine's model of the Trinity:

He proceeds from them by way of love, and love in them mutually each to other is the original of his person.<sup>15</sup>

This would appear to be completely straightforward, were it not for a variety of other passages in which Goodwin seems to be moving in a different direction. What makes these so difficult is that they come in such close proximity to his affirmations of the double procession.

While commenting on John 15.26 ("When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me"), Goodwin says:

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<sup>13</sup> Vol.6, p.50.

<sup>14</sup> Vol. 6, p.8.

<sup>15</sup> Vol.6, p.40

**'...who proceedeth from the Father'. Which last addition is to shew the divine procession of the Holy Ghost, and the original and consubstantiality of his person, to be out of the substance of the Father, proceeding from him..... that hath his subsistence, or his being a person, by proceeding from God the Father.<sup>16</sup>**

Goodwin elaborates this point to clarify his meaning:

**There is.. a manifest distinguishing between that dispensatory sending of him from the Father to them , and that substantial proceeding of his from the Father, as a third person; and this is added to show the original ground, why it must be from the Father that he sends him, and with his consent first had; because his very person is by proceeding from the Father, and therefore that his office too. And therefore that latter is spoken in the present time, whereas that other speech of Christ, 'Whom I will send from the Father,' is in the future; because the Holy Ghost his dispensatory sending, both from the Father and Christ, was yet to come; whereas this personal proceeding of his from the Father was then, when he spake it, and is continually, and had been from eternity.<sup>17</sup>**

Here it seems as if Goodwin makes one of the few divisions between the economic and the immanent Trinity in his whole theology. In the ontological Trinity, the Spirit derives His Being and Person from the Father, but in the economic Trinity He is to be seen as proceeding from the Father and the Son, most especially in terms of being sent out upon the Church, but also in terms of His Person and Being. This explanation seems to be the only way of gathering together all the varied material in Goodwin's scheme.

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<sup>16</sup> Vol.6, p.5

<sup>17</sup> Vol.6, p.5.

The donor or bestower of the Holy Ghost is God the Father through Christ. As the Father is the original of the persons in the Trinity, so of this great gift. Therefore Christ (John xv.26) when he speaks of 'sending the Spirit from the Father,' adds, as the reason why he should be sent from the Father, that 'he proceeds from the Father' (his subsistence doth), naming him as the fountain of both himself and the Spirit also.... Christ, as God-man, received the Spirit first.... And when Christ ascended into heaven he received him from the Father, Acts ii.33, and so he shed him forth on us.<sup>18</sup>

The chapter in which this is found is entitled "How the Holy Ghost is the gift of God the Father to us, in and by Jesus Christ". Taking Titus 3: 5,6 as his text Goodwin begins by showing the Father to be the source of the Spirit. His second point is that the Father, although the source of the Spirit, does not send the Spirit himself, but does so through Christ. It is not as if the Son is passive as the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son, but that by His meritorious intercession on behalf of the Church, the Son "purchased not only all the graces of the Spirit for us, but the Spirit himself (whom we had forfeited) to dwell in us".<sup>19</sup> Jesus could not breathe the Spirit out upon His disciples until He had shed His blood. "But Christ having died, and having, as the Lamb slain, purchased the Spirit, and being ascended up to the throne of God, he, as the Lamb, now sheds forth the Spirit: John vii. 38,39".<sup>20</sup> This theology is taken from Galatians 3:13,14 "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith". Goodwin concludes: "And, forasmuch as the gift of the Spirit

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<sup>18</sup> Vol.6, p.52

<sup>19</sup> Vol.6, p.52

<sup>20</sup> Vol.6, p.52

comes under a promise, as well as other blessings, it must needs come under the purchase of Christ's blood, which confirmed all the promises".<sup>21</sup>

Goodwin begins the exegesis of Rev. 22:1 "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb". Recalling that Jesus had promised that belief in Him would result in rivers of water flowing from the belly (John 7: 38,39), Goodwin draws the conclusion that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son in a "dispensatory" sense because of the Work of Christ.

This water of life issues, you see, from the throne of the Lamb, who in the 5th chap., ver.6, appeared at the throne of God as the Lamb slain, and redeeming us with his blood, and as such doth shed forth the Spirit upon us; and is even there also said to have the fullness of the Spirit on him.... Hence also when we receive the cup in the Lord's supper, which is termed the communion of Christ's blood, 1 Cor. x., we are yet said to 'drink into one Spirit;' for that blood is *vehiculum Spiritus*, the Spirit runs in and with this blood. We therefore know whom we are beholden unto for the Spirit; and whom to go to for the Spirit, even to the Father, and to Christ, and to his blood: and to the Father through Christ, who gives commission to the Spirit to work such and such measures of grace, at such times to fall upon us, and at such and such times to withdraw.<sup>22</sup>

Goodwin is able to describe the person of the Father as the one from whom the Spirit proceeds and the begetter of the Son.<sup>23</sup> Yet, he only does this when describing the ontological Trinity. We have seen how he organizes the procession of the Spirit in the "dispensatory" life of the Trinity.

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<sup>21</sup> Vol.6, p.52

<sup>22</sup> Vol.6, p.53.

<sup>23</sup> Vol.7, p.492.

So where does Goodwin stand on the issue of the double procession? It depends upon how the issue is defined. If we allow Turretin to define the issue then it will become clearer:

(1)..[T]he Son emanates from the Father alone, but the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son together. (2).. [T]he Son emanates by way of generation, which terminates not only on the personality, but also on the similarity (on account of which the Son is called the image of the Father and according to which the Son receives the property of communicating to another person the same essence; but the Spirit by way of spiration, which terminates only on the personality and by which the proceeding person does not receive the property of communicating that essence to another person.<sup>24</sup>

Turretin, while noting that although wrong the Greeks should not have been charged with heresy, makes his case for the double procession.

1. The Holy Spirit is sent from both the Father and the Son, and thus should be seen as proceeding from both "because he cannot be sent by the Son unless he proceeds from him".<sup>25</sup>

2. In Galatians 4:6 He is referred to as being the Spirit of the Son.

3. "Whatever the Spirit has, he has from the Son no less than from the Father (Jn 16:13-15), and as the Son is said to be from the Father because he does not speak of himself, but of the Father (from whom he receives all

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<sup>24</sup> Francis Turretin: Institutes of Elenctic Theology Volume 1 (first through tenth topics). p.308-310 (Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 1994).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. Vol. 1, p.309.



things), so the Spirit ought to be said to be and proceed from the Son because he hears and speaks from him".<sup>26</sup>

4. Because Jesus breathed the Spirit upon the disciples in time, he must so breathe Him in eternity: "for temporal procession presupposes an eternal".

The Father and the Son breathe the Holy Spirit not as two diverse principles (since the breathing power is the same in both), but as two self-existent (*supposita*) concur in that procession by the same power.... Although the Spirit may be said to proceed from the Father (Jn 15:26), it is not denied of the Son. Indeed it is implied because the mission of the Spirit is ascribed to him and whatever the Father has, the Son is said to have equally (Jn 16:15).

Since breathing virtue is numerically one in the Father and the Son, it is not good to say that in this respect the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son (as if he was principally from the Father, but secondarily and less principally from the Son). If the mode of subsisting is considered (according to which the Father is the fountain of Deity from which the Son emanates), not improperly in this sense is he said to proceed from the Father through the Son (as to the mode and order of procession).<sup>27</sup>

Turretin makes the issue quite clear in terms current at the time. (Today the debate is cast in rather different terms due to the renewal of the whole question).

It seems historically difficult to see Goodwin as rejecting the Filioque, and in his writings he never consciously does so. However, viewed through

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Vol. 1, p.310.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. Vol. 1, p.310.

Turretin's careful handling of the issue, it does appear that Goodwin does understand the ontological Trinity in the Eastern sense. He writes of the Spirit proceeding from the Father through the Son. The least that can be said about Goodwin is that he flits between different uses of the key terms ("sending", "procession", "substantial procession", "dispensatory sending"), such that it is difficult to follow exactly what he means at all times.

It is interesting to note that in his exposition of Revelation, Goodwin praises the Confession of Faith of Cyril Lukaris (1572-1638), Patriarch of Constantinople, for being, in all fundamental points, wholly agreed with Goodwin's own theology. Now, although Cyril was condemned for Calvinistic tendencies, yet he did not alter his conception of the Trinity to that of the Calvinists. It seems that the inner direction of Goodwin's Trinitarian thought is towards the East, even though this does not emerge as a conscious decision.<sup>28</sup>

## 2. The Work of the Spirit

Having looked at the Person of the Spirit, we must now ask what is the essence of the Work of the Spirit? What is His Work in relation to the Father and the Son? Goodwin answers that the Spirit makes the work of the Father and the Son actually the possession of human beings. That is to say, nothing is achieved for humanity at all until it is applied by the Holy Spirit. By this Goodwin does not simply mean that all is legally accomplished in Christ, and is subjectively realized by the work of the Spirit. Rather, he means that nothing is achieved at all until the Spirit makes "all actually ours". Volume 6 is given

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<sup>28</sup> Given the historical circumstances of Goodwin, he could not have made such an Eastern move in the way that it is possible to do today.

over to demonstrating the truth of this statement. Goodwin's argument is that regeneration is what becoming a Christian essentially is and that it is the work of the Spirit to accomplish this. Without regeneration there is no reconciliation between God and sinful humanity. This theological scheme ensures that the Spirit is not the "serving maid" to the Father and the Son, but is a fully equal member of the Trinity upon which the other two depend, at least economically, as much, if not more so, than He depends on them.

Goodwin's Trinity is essentially personal. He is quite convinced that it is the concept of person that makes the Trinity what God is. It is not the work of God in three movements or ways which is the essence of who God is, but it is the personal giving of God that forms the goal, the telos, of the divine work. God is supremely interested in personal encounter with his redeemed creatures, and this personal encounter involves the three distinct persons of the Trinity, beginning (from our perspective) with the Spirit, leading to a kind of marriage to the Son, which gives access to the Father.

Taking Jesus's discourse of John chapters 14-17, Goodwin uses the final teaching of Jesus as the foundation for his whole Pneumatology. He begins by strongly asserting the distinct personhood of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third witness who makes the witness of Jesus a valid one in the Jewish legal system (referring back to John 8:17&18). Now Jesus carefully introduces the character and personality of this third witness.

We may also observe how industriously careful Christ is further to characterize this person of the Holy Spirit, the author of these works, and to describe who he was, and what manner of person, that they might be sure to mind him, and have a regard to him,

and to know whom and to what name they were to be so much beholden.<sup>29</sup>

Noting that the coming of the Spirit had been promised in the Old Testament, Goodwin states that whereas Christ had been the great promise of the Old Testament, with the expectation being built up concerning the coming of the Christ in the flesh, the coming of the Spirit is the great promise of the New Testament. "For as Christ's coming was the great promise of the Old Testament, so the sending of the Spirit is entitled the 'promise of the Father' in the New: Luke xxiv. 49, 'And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you'"<sup>30</sup>. Because Christ now claims equal authority with the Father in the sending of this promised Spirit, we are to conclude the economic procession of the Spirit from the Son. He continues "he was first to receive him for us, and shed him forth on us, Acts ii. 33, that so it might be made good, that 'all the promises are yea and amen in him;' seeing this promise of the Spirit is given upon Christ's account, as he is the Son"<sup>31</sup>. Thus it appears that Goodwin sees the Son as having the full authority of the Father to send the Spirit, such that the Son receives the gift of the promised Spirit on our behalf.

The individual personality of the Spirit is a vital concern of Goodwin throughout his works. Time and again he seeks to draw the reader away from considering the effects, gifts and graces of the Spirit and to simply appreciate and long for the Person of the Spirit considered in Himself. Thus, he would have us notice that Christ goes to great lengths to designate the distinct Person and Work of the Spirit.

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<sup>29</sup> Vol. 6, p.5

<sup>30</sup> Vol. 6, p.8.

<sup>31</sup> Vol. 6, p.9.

As likewise to assure them of his coming upon them, when himself was gone; and that therefore they might honour him in his coming, for his work, as he would have them to honour himself for his own work, and coming in the flesh. It is as if he had said, I would not, for that honour I ever look for from yourselves, that you should so attribute the comfort you shall have, or the revealing of truth to you (from which he is called 'the Spirit of truth'), so unto me or my Father alone, as to neglect or omit to give him his peculiar honour in it; for it properly, and of due, belongs to him. You are and shall be beholden to me and my Father, for the sending of him; but you are to be especially beholden to himself, for the work he doth in you, being sent by us<sup>32</sup>.

The distinction is between the honour and authority of the Father and the Son for their respective works, including their joint activity of sending the Spirit, and the honour due to the Spirit, whose consent was required before He could be sent. But, what is the peculiar work of the Spirit?

John 14:16&17 ;"The Comforter, the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. But ye know him for he dwelleth in you, and shall be in you".

On the basis of these verses Goodwin believes that Jesus is indicating to the disciples the extent to which they are already deeply indebted to the work of the Spirit. They had already received regeneration, conversion and a calling out from the world, and they still had more to come.

He is also called the Spirit of truth, not simply reminding the apostles of what Christ had said, but teaching them new truths, the truths that Christ said he could not give to his disciples because they could not yet bear them.

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<sup>32</sup> Vol. 6, p.6.

However, the distinctive feature of the Spirit's teaching is that "he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak". He shall teach of things to come (John 15:26&27). He would sanctify them against sin and corruption. He is the *Holy Spirit of truth*, that is, he sanctifies and teaches truth. But He is also the Comforter (John 14:16-18), and He will direct and assist the Christians in their prayers in such a manner that they will receive what they ask for. Hitherto the disciples had not asked anything in the name of Christ, but "in that day", when the Holy Spirit is come the disciples would be enabled to pray in the name of Christ. The work of the Spirit is not just within the Church, in that the glory of the conversion of the Gentiles is His, convicting of sin, of righteousness and of judgement.

That the Spirit could not come until Christ had gone was not for any modalist reasons, but so that the Spirit would receive full glory for His work to avoid confusion with the work of Christ. Goodwin feels that it is as if Jesus had said:

He will not do these works while I am here, and I have committed all to him. That look, as my Father hath visibly 'committed all judgement unto me', (John v. 22, 23, 'For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgement unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father'), so here: I and my Father will send him, having committed all these things to him, that all men might honour the Holy Ghost, even as they honour the Father and the Son. Even as in like manner the reason why the Spirit was not sent while Christ was on earth, was to show that not the Father alone sent him, but that he came from Christ as well as from the Father<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Vol. 6, p.7.

Christ ascended to heaven first, because it had to be shown that the Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son together. To establish this point Goodwin refers to Acts 2:32 ; "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which you see and hear". This is most important, because here we see the Son as the one who receives the Spirit to send. The significance of this will become more and more prominent as we explore Goodwin's theology.

The Spirit must have "a coming in state, in a solemn and visible manner, accompanied with visible effects, as well as Christ had".<sup>34</sup> Christ and the Spirit had both been present, in working their respective works, during the Old Testament period, but both received a visible, announced coming. This line of argument was first begun by Augustine in Bk IV of his work on the Trinity as he seeks to explain how Christ could have come in the fullness of time, yet already been present in the Old Testament. He concludes that the visible, announced appearing of Christ at His incarnation is a coming in state, a testimony by the whole creation with supernatural portents to signify his coming. In the same way the Spirit has a similar public coming, when all the miraculous signs and miracles performed on the Day of Pentecost publicly testify that the Spirit had come.<sup>35</sup> Following Augustine, Goodwin argues that the Spirit's coming was announced by His visible coming, first in the appearance of a dove upon Christ, then as cloven tongues upon the gathered church. However, it must be remembered that there was no personal union between the Spirit and the dove or those tongues of fire in the way that Christ was personally united to that visible humanity. Rather "these appearances of

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<sup>34</sup> Vol.6, p.8

<sup>35</sup> See Bk IV Ch. XXI of Augustine's De Trinitatis (Edinburgh, 1988).

the Holy Ghost are to be understood by us as visible outward representations and discoveries of him to be the third person"<sup>36</sup>.

The Son and the Spirit, then, although active in the world from the moment of creation, both have particular, public occasions when, in terms of the unfolding of redemptive-history, they are said to have come. Goodwin encourages the reader to see these events as revelations of the heart of God towards humanity:

God the Father had but two grand gifts to bestow; and when once they should be given out of him, he had left them nothing that was great (comparatively) to give, for they contained all good in them; and these two gifts were his Son, who was the promise in the Old Testament, and his Spirit, the promise of the New. And the Father doth honour himself to us by this title, that he is the promiser and giver of the Spirit; and Christ himself, now that he is come, takes the honour too of that, to make the sending of the Spirit his promise also<sup>37</sup>.

So, both the Father and the Son are honoured in that they have the office of sending the Spirit. Yet this is not to make the Spirit ontologically subordinate to the Son, because Goodwin goes on to say that as John the Baptist foretold the manifestation of the Son in the flesh, preparing the way of the Lord, even so the Spirit has Christ to foretell His coming upon flesh, and to prepare the hearts of humanity for His arrival.

The work of the Spirit is not just an appendix added onto the main work of the Godhead. The conversion of the whole Gentile world and the building and raising of the churches of the New Testament was reserved for His glory

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<sup>36</sup> Vol. 6, p.8.

<sup>37</sup> Vol. 6, p.9.



alone. In other words there is no effective work towards humanity without the completing work of the Spirit. Goodwin notes how the creed puts belief in the Spirit so near to belief in the holy catholic church, because the two are so intimately connected. "His visible coming at Pentecost was the visible consecration and dedication of that great temple, the mystical body of Christ, to be reared under the gospel (the several members of which body are called 'temples of the Holy Ghost' 1 Cor. iii. 16), as that appearance at Christ's baptism was the consecration of the head"<sup>38</sup>. This coming of the Spirit is referred to as the beginning of the Gospel in Acts 11:15, because until the Spirit had come there could be no ministry of reconciliation. The Gentiles had always been regarded as unclean, but they were purified by the work of the Spirit in conversion, removing all difference between Jew and Gentile.

This brings us to the key question of the relationship between the Son and the Spirit in Goodwin's Trinity. It may well be best, before that question is addressed directly, to note how Goodwin sees the relationship between the concepts of the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity.

It appears that Goodwin barely acknowledges a distinction between the Trinity in salvation history and the Trinity in Itself. As far as I can tell this seems to be a consequence of his doctrine of Scripture, in that any revelation of God in Scripture is true without remainder. This enables Goodwin to take intra-Trinitarian conversations quite seriously as genuine reportage of what the members of the Trinity have said to one another. Goodwin frequently discusses the persons of the Trinity in eternity, not at all in an apophatic way, but in a way that suggests that he sees the Trinity as three very distinct persons, with quite individual personas. Goodwin would have no time for any

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<sup>38</sup> Vol. 6, p.9.

view of God that would tend towards seeing the Trinity as an economic arrangement, or that at the end, when God is all in all, the Trinity will in some sense be lessened if not abandoned in favour of some kind of monolithic Unity. This feature of Goodwin's theology seems to be most prominent in his work on Christ our Mediator in which he carefully spells out the way in which, in the eternal counsel of God, the Father persuades the Son to undertake the work of salvation. In this Trinity there is no suggestion of God being ultimately but a single person, or a single mind or will: God is quite definitely a society of three persons.<sup>39</sup>

In modern theology the social doctrine of the Trinity has become the current fashion, sometimes grinding the unity of God away with what sometimes seems as near to tri-theism as one can get without abandoning classical mono-theism. Many theologians<sup>40</sup> make the distinction between God-in-Himself, who is not subject to direct Trinitarian language, and God in His working towards humanity, who can only be described in Trinitarian language. However, when Goodwin refers to God-in-Himself he tends to mean simply the three persons of the Trinity whether before, after or during their specific works of redemption: he never takes this to mean God considered in a different, unrevealed way.

At the foundation of all this there seems to be in Goodwin a view of time and history that does not militate against the nature of God. By this is meant that whereas in Barth history stands in dialectical tension to eternity, in

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<sup>39</sup> Although some theologians express nervousness over the subject of inter-personal conversations within the Trinity, yet conversation seems to be an essential aspect of true personhood.

<sup>40</sup> e.g. Abraham Kuyper The Work of the Holy Spirit (Michigan, 1956). p.13-17 - "the indwelling works of God are the activities of His *Being*, without the distinctions of Persons; while His outgoing works admit and to some extent demand this distinction".

Goodwin history becomes the scene of the divine action, and eternity is more like the planning room where the persons of the Trinity make decisions regarding their respective tasks in redemption. Inevitably this makes human history extremely significant and the action of God in this history is extremely important for the history of God.

The way in which Goodwin sees God-in-Himself as a vital communion of the three persons, not essentially different from the communion of the three persons in redemptive history, is brought out strikingly well in Volume 9 of the works as Goodwin is searching for a motive for God's election to redeem. The first motive is deemed to be the manifestation of the name and mercy of God to the world. However, the second motive, and the one to which Goodwin devotes far more attention, is the desire in the heart of God to draw redeemed sinners into the "oneness and intimacy of communion which the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost had and have amongst themselves"<sup>41</sup>.

Citing Gregory Nazianzen, Goodwin begins with the proposal that it is the unity of the persons of the Trinity that is the foundation for the union of the creature with God. This motive has been present in the counsel of God even at the creation: "At the first making of man there was such a consultation of the persons held, and God the Father says to the other two, 'Let us make man according to our image'"<sup>42</sup>.

God says this even when the union between humanity and God that was only to be revealed in the Person of Christ was as yet far distant. When Jesus prays that the church might be one even as the Father and the Son are

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<sup>41</sup> Vol. 9, p.130.

<sup>42</sup> Vol. 9, p.131.

one, Goodwin does not take this to be an utterance of the Second Person considered only from the perspective of His incarnate state, but rather he takes this to be an inter-Trinitarian conversation in which the Son is seeking to persuade the Father to allow the Church to enjoy the same blessed union and communion that they had, until now, exclusively enjoyed.

Which is as if he had said, Thou knowest what an entire intimacy of union hath been between us, 'Thou in me, and I in thee', and how sweet it hath been unto us; I enjoy it, and thou art and hast been intimately delighted in it. Father (says he), be moved to let these *also* have the like participation of it in us, and with us.<sup>43</sup>

It is the task or title of the Son to be the Counsellor of the Father, ever at His side to advise and discuss the plans of the Trinity. The plea of the Son to bring the redeemed church into the fellowship of the Trinity is decisive in the plan of election:

And this plea of his, as second person, for us, shews the bottom counsel of the heart of God among the Holy Three from everlasting, when that blessed and *Sacratissimus Consessus Trinitatis* was held, that most sacred sitting of the Trinity, as Gerhard speaks on John xvi. 14,15, that *Concilium Trinitatis*, as Rolloc on the same place, then it was this motion on our behalf was made amongst them... and the original ground of that motion was the communion the three persons do hold in that one Godhead, therefore they designed to communicate the same to those they loved and foreknew, and were then a-choosing unto an union with them.<sup>44</sup>

Goodwin goes on to outline how the Trinity has conversations using the first person plural pronoun to enable discussion to take place, and this takes place while in no way compromising the one essence of the three persons.

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<sup>43</sup> Vol. 9, p.130.

<sup>44</sup> Vol. 9, p.144.

Goodwin is not finally satisfied with the psychological model of the Trinity, which sees the three persons of God as three aspects of an individual Psyche, that is, memory, understanding and will (Augustine's version). In this kind of model the Second Person, as Logos, becomes the sort of speech capacity of the Godhead, which would make inter-Trinitarian conversation an almost inconceivable notion. Goodwin takes the concept of person very seriously in his account of the immanent Trinity. This theme of the accessibility of the inner life of the Trinity is repeated throughout Goodwin's works. In Volume 4 in the treatise on The Knowledge of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, he devotes chapters 2-4 to a discussion of the inner communion of the persons of the Trinity, where he very clearly and definitely spells out his belief, from Scripture, that God is a communion of persons, and that this communion of persons is made known to us in the very words of Scripture.

Goodwin refers his reader to the section of Volume 4 that discusses conversation within the Trinity. He notes that:

they are found speaking, not only *us*, as persons, but also ordinarily one to another, in the language of *I* and *thou*, as Heb x. 5, 'A body hast *thou* fitted *me*', which Christ spoke to his Father as a person existing with him then when he took on a human nature.....You have each speaking of himself as a person. Thus, the Holy Ghost, Acts xiii. 1,2 , 'Separate *me* Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto *I* have called them.'<sup>45</sup>

Goodwin constantly emphasizes the distinct persons of the Godhead, yet this definite division of the persons does not undermine their union. The

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<sup>45</sup> Vol. 4, pp.359-360.

union of the Godhead, for Goodwin, cannot be some impersonal, ontological Being, yet he did not have the conceptual tools to find a way out of the metaphysical categories in which he was forced to work. The personalness that pervades the whole of Goodwin's theology finds high expression in the Volume 9, where Goodwin is so keen to show that election flows out of the character of God:

The Scriptures do present the three persons, not only as three witnesses to us, but as three blessed companions of a knot and society among themselves, enjoying fellowship and delights accordingly in themselves... [T]he Son speaks not, but what he hears of the Father...; nor doth the Spirit speak but what he hears of both..... Now the delights of these divine persons with the sons of men afore the world was, lay much in thoughts taken up aforehand, of what a sweet fellowship one day they should have in admitting them into an intimate converse and acquaintance with themselves.<sup>46</sup>

Not content with his enquiry into the inner life of the Trinity in eternity Goodwin goes on to state that the three divine persons, considered both individually and in their unity, "were prone and propense unto such a creature-fellowship". It must be said that the grounding of election in the over-flowing generosity of the communion of the persons of the Trinity in their eternal self-existence is much more attractive than Turretin's proposal, grounding election in the bare will and good-pleasure of God! In his sermons Goodwin frequently exhorts his congregation to pursue a more intimate, direct and personal relationship with the persons of the Trinity. It is not the benefits that the Persons give, but the immediate encounter with them in personal interaction that is true Christianity.

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<sup>46</sup> Vol. 9, p.145&146

Nevertheless, Goodwin is aware of the fact that there is a particular communion enjoyed by the members of the Trinity which can never be enjoyed by the redeemed creation.<sup>47</sup>

There is an incommunicable fellowship enjoyed by the divine persons. This must be so because "an eternity of time did pass when there were no creatures at all; but the three persons wholly enjoyed themselves all that time without interruption"<sup>48</sup>.

Again we can see that Goodwin is quite happy with the concept of time, even describing God as existing in Himself in "time without interruption". This must be because the concept of timelessness is so noxious to the concept of personhood, there being no possibility of personal interaction in a timeless realm of pure being. The way in which Goodwin collapses the immanent Trinity into the economic Trinity seems to partly stem from his strong antipathy to conceiving of God in any other way than the lively personal inter-action and action that is found throughout the Biblical narrative. The idea of the three persons of the Trinity engrossed in one another's company, but not to the exclusion of others, from everlasting to everlasting so grips Goodwin that he seems to abandon standard models of a division between God in Himself and God for us in favour of God-in-Himself-who-is-for-us.

Nevertheless, the very intensity and eternity of the communion of the divine persons means that it cannot be communicated absolutely to any mere

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<sup>47</sup> Of course, Goodwin is aware of the fact that here he is, to a certain degree, undermining the high claims he has made in his Discourse on Election: "Whatever use I have made of this 17th of John, in discerning of this union to another purpose, my scope now is to shew" that there is a supreme union between the three persons in the Godhead which cannot be communicated to any creature. (see Vol. 4, p.362-363).

<sup>48</sup> Vol. 4, p.363.

creature. There is inevitably a qualitative difference between our union with God and the union of the three persons, in that the "supreme and independent communion between those persons in the Godhead" consisted in the shared fountain of life which is the very Being of God, which no creature could share without actually being God. Added to this there is a mutual love, knowledge, interest, glory and enjoyment that transcends the capacities of even the highest creature to be fully involved in. There has to be a final barrier which cannot be crossed without compromising the Creator-creature distinction. Goodwin is always keen to push the limits of this barrier, making sure that he has gone as far as he can with the high privileges and glory that is the inheritance of the saints, yet the privileges of the divine Being Himself, shared by the three persons, cannot be finally extended beyond the three. Goodwin does not wish to make God appear distant and unknown with these reservations, but rather wishes to provide a context and background so that the true blessings of the saints may be properly appreciated. The union the Christian has with Christ means that their genealogy derives from that highest union of all between the Father and the Son - "although our union be of a lower degree and kind, yet it is the offspring of the highest and noblest union".<sup>49</sup>

The Church should derive great comfort and satisfaction from contemplating the derivation of the union with Christ it enjoys from the union of God in three persons, the union of the two natures of Christ in one person, and the union of the multitudes who form one body, even one man (Eph 2:15), in Christ.

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<sup>49</sup> Vol. 4, p.371.



Thus, we see that Goodwin rejects apophatic theology. He barely acknowledges a distinction between God in Himself and God for us, an immanent and an economic Trinity. With respect to the Spirit this seems to lead to the conclusion that He derives His Being from the Father, but is sent by both the Father and the Son, having been given to the Son at the Ascension. It is a moment of great importance when Goodwin expresses the view that the consent of the Spirit had to be given before He could be sent. This shows Goodwin's commitment to the Trinity as a genuinely equal society of persons, who are not identical in mind and thoughts, but are identical in values and attitudes. Throughout his works Goodwin often speaks of one member of the Trinity persuading another of a course of action, not out of mere speculation, but because whenever the Scriptures report an inter-Trinitarian speech Goodwin treats it precisely as that, in precisely the way it is written.

We are now in a position to examine the relationship between Christ and the Spirit in Goodwin's theology. He divides the work of the Spirit up under three headings:

- I. What work and use he is, and was of, to Christ our head.
- II. What to the church, taken collectively.
- III. What to every saint.<sup>50</sup>

In this chapter we will only examine the first of these headings, leaving the other two to separate chapters.

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<sup>50</sup> Vol. 6, p.11.

During the seventeenth century Spirit-Christology enjoyed a relatively brief Golden Age, which seemed to end with the Enlightenment, probably due to the intellectual incapacity of that Age to conceive of God as both distinct from His creation yet acting upon it. The Puritan concentration on the incapacity of fallen human nature made them acutely aware of the necessity of divine action upon the human heart if spiritual life were to be gained. Sibbes, Howe, Goodwin, Owen, Gumall, Flavel and Brooks all gave themselves to a careful examination of every Scripture that spoke of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit. This willingness to formulate their doctrines *a posteriori* enabled them to see the surprisingly large amount of Biblical material that indicates the dependence of Christ upon the Spirit.

The very earliest Christologies were Spirit-Christologies. Before they were able to mature into a more fully rounded Christological conception, the Trinitarian debates pushed Christology inevitably into second place. The problem with this was that the Christological agenda was being written by the Trinitarian debates, which failed to do justice to the full range of data that was relevant to Christology. After Nicea the Christological problems come into the foreground again, cast in a totally new light. In affirming the *homoousion* of the Father and the Son, the Post-Nicene Church was confronted with the problem of defining deity and humanity in Jesus Christ, but the Person and Work of the Spirit had not been taken up into the theological melting-pot. This made a realistic Christology difficult. Thus, due to the Trinitarian debates and the peculiar philosophical agenda of the day, the Person of Christ was almost reduced to the inter-relation and inter-action between a divine nature and a human nature.

As has been often said, Chalcedon solved few problems, but it did define the problems of Christology, showing that any Christological conception had to guard at least 4 basic truths:

1. His true and proper deity;
2. His true and proper humanity;
3. The unity of deity and humanity in one person;
4. The proper distinction of deity and humanity in one person.

Goodwin's Christology is fully informed by the debates of the Early Church, but is determined to move beyond them. Goodwin is fully convinced of the need for a two-nature Christology, and in his treatise on Christ our Mediator, Goodwin thoroughly demonstrates that for soteriological reasons Christ must be incarnate as fully God and fully man, without confusion, in one person. It was necessary for our mediator to be God. He could not otherwise have been present at the making of the eternal covenant of redemption. None but God could have the power to bestow such great blessings as are those of the covenant. None but God could be the object of our trust, faith, hope, and obedience. None but God could be sufficiently able to succour us at all times.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand Christ had to be fully human:

It was necessary our mediator should be man...it was not fit, that we, being the persons to be reconciled, should be beholden to a stranger, but to a kinsman of our own nature.... That the relations that were to be between us and him might be founded upon the greatest nearness, and so more natural and kindly, it was meet that our mediator should be of the same nature with us. Seeing that we fell by the sin of a man, God ordained that we should be redeemed by a man. Seeing by man came sin, by man came redemption.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> See Vol. 5, p.37-41.

<sup>52</sup> See Vol. 5, pp.44-48.

In the Puritan tradition Goodwin also emphasizes that Christ had to be human so that He could fulfil God's demands upon humanity, through obedience to the law. To complete the Chalcedonian agenda Goodwin goes on to assert the necessity of a union of the two natures in one person:

It was fit our mediator should be *both* God and man in one person, that so he might partake of the nature of both parties, and be a middle person between them, and fill up the distance, and bring them near to one another. Thus, he might be in a better capacity to communicate unto us his benefits, and he might be capable of performing what our redemption required. [Christ was] a medium, not only between God and us, but one with God and us, symbolizing with both. Therefore, *mediatio operativa* is founded, and hath influence from his *mediatio substantialis*, that his works of mediation.. ariseth from his person, that they may arise from both natures, so as both natures have an influence to all his works, and they are works of both that he might be *totus mediator*, a whole entire mediator, in his person and in his works.<sup>53</sup>

It is worth spending a moment examining the way in which Goodwin speaks of Christ as "symbolizing with both", particularly in the light of Tillich's work. For Tillich the Christological title-terms can be used as meaningful symbols only when historical criticism has liberated them from "literalistic connotations which made them useless for theology and an unnecessary stumbling block for those who wanted to understand the meaning of the Christian symbols".<sup>54</sup> For Goodwin, however, what makes the Christological title-terms so powerful is that they describe a historical reality with enduring consequences that form the decisive moment in the relationship between humanity and God. Given Tillich's view of "God", this is inevitably an

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<sup>53</sup> See Vol. 5, pp.48-55.

<sup>54</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology* Vol.2, (London, 1953). p.129&130

impossible position for his symbols to describe. Tillich, speaking of the "Son of Man" as a symbol for Man freed from the conditions of estrangement, concludes that "literalism" (Tillich's ultimate hate) imagines "a transcendent being who, once upon a time, was sent down from his heavenly place and transmuted into a man. In this way a true and powerful symbol becomes an absurd story, and the Christ becomes a half-god, a particular being between God and man".<sup>55</sup> Tillich's blatant and deliberate caricaturing and mishandling of a Chalcedonian understanding of Christology is of course "an absurd story", yet he helpfully illustrates why there is a need for a genuinely and completely human Christ. Tillich represents an existential critique of Chalcedon, and in many ways his criticism has validity (even if his alternative proposals do not). For Goodwin, Christ symbolizes with both humanity and God precisely because of a "literalist" interpretation. Christ embodies the goals, aspirations, concerns, life-experiences, character, feelings, will, hopes and fears of both God and humanity. He is the true representative of both, not simply in the sense of being a legal substitute or ambassador, but in the further sense of being like both, summing up both, reflecting the true nature of both.

Goodwin heads off the obvious question: "you will then ask how this can be, that he should be both?" By way of answer he launches into a very intricate and complex analysis of Hebrews chapter 2, especially verse 16.

The meaning is, he did take man's nature into one person with himself. He not only took on him, but to him - *assumpsit non hominem personam, sed hominem in personam*, he took not the person of a man, but a man to be one person with himself. He took the seed of Abraham to himself, that is, to subsist in himself, not of itself, and to have his subsistence communicated to it; this nature being, as a part of him, subsisting in him, but communicating the subsistence of that divine person to the

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid. p.126.

human nature, that they are personally one, as truly as soul and body joined become one man..... Christ may be said to be made man, and to be as essentially man as he is God; both natures remaining distinct are made one person.<sup>56</sup>

Goodwin goes to great lengths to show clearly and carefully that the union of the divine Son to the human nature could not be a union of persons:

He took not a person on him, yet he took our whole nature for substance, every way as perfect as ours, in all the parts of it, both body and soul.... It is called flesh indeed, and a body, but yet lest only a body should seem to be meant, he is called 'a man'..... He had a perfect body as ours, and a soul, and both united, and so was a whole man.<sup>57</sup>

Usually such an uncompromisingly Chalcedonian Christology would tend towards unrealistic and inhuman representations of the earthly life of Jesus Christ. However, Goodwin overcomes the potential dangers of a straight two nature Christology with his strong emphasis on Christ's dependence on the Holy Spirit. Goodwin loves to paint as thoroughly human a picture of the life of Jesus as he possibly can, but never once does he lose sight of His full deity.

Chapter 7 of Book II of Christ our Mediator is headed "that it was not only fit that Christ should be man, but such a man as to be like us in the matter and substance of his body, and to be like us in his production and birth, to be born of a woman, as we are". Goodwin's axiom for Christology seems to be "He is as like as may be to us, as near as possibly might be, so as not to take infection". Goodwin is not keen to keep the Son hermetically sealed in a

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<sup>56</sup> Vol. 5, p.51.

<sup>57</sup> Vol. 5, p.54.

special container quite ontologically distant from the messy materiality and restrictions of human life. The closer the involvement of the Son with ordinary human life the better, so long as nothing of the divinity is compromised.

He comes so near, you see, that it is but the cutting of a hair keeps him from being infected; and so, though he has the same substance, yet separate from sinners.... And therefore though he be conceived in the same place as we are, and be of the same substance with us, yet not after the same way; and it is not the substance that defiles, or the place, but the way of framing our natures.<sup>58</sup>

Here Goodwin is not endorsing the Augustinian view of sex that sees the sexual act itself as necessarily sinful, but saying that sin is conveyed by the parents to the child, that is to say, sinful humanity can only produce sinful humanity. Sinful parents cannot produce holy offspring. The sin that is communicated is bound up with corruption of nature, rather than a forensic guilt which stands exterior to human being. Fallen humanity stands condemned not primarily because of guilt for the bare action of Adam's sin, but because of inheriting his corrupt humanity. It is spiritually illegal to have the corrupt human nature that is the common property of natural human beings in this state of fallenness. We will see in a later chapter how Goodwin does not think in terms of merely forensic justification as the essence of reconciliation, rather it is regeneration, a recreated human nature that is the true heart of God's reconciliation of humanity to himself.

Therefore, if a child produced by parents with corrupt natures must, by the law of like producing like (begetting after their own kind), also have a corrupt human nature, then the humanity of Christ must be generated in a

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<sup>58</sup> Vol. 5, p.56-62.

special way. To be human is not necessarily to be sinful, although all humans born from sinful parents will be sinful. This is the decisive point at which Christ differs in His humanity from the rest of humanity. Although the task of assuming humanity was His, the humanity which He assumed was one prepared for Him by the Holy Spirit.

His body, though made of the same matter, seed, that ours is, and that seed articulated into the same shape ours is, yet because by another hand, 'the power of the Most High', therefore he is a holy one, separate from sinners.<sup>59</sup>

The Son was dependent upon the Spirit at that very first moment of human life, at the conception of Jesus Christ.

### 3. The Spirit and the Two Natures of Christ

Some divines do further ascribe unto this Spirit the special honour of tying that marriage knot, or union, between the Son of God and that man Jesus, whom the Holy Ghost formed in the virgin's womb. Now, if their meaning be that he, in common with the Father and the Son, did join in that great action, I grant it, according to the measure of that great rule, that *opera ad extra sunt indivisa*..... But..[t]he Father indeed sent the Son into the world, to take flesh; and the Holy Ghost formed that flesh he assumed; but it was the Son's special act to take it up into himself, and to assume it.<sup>60</sup>

Goodwin rejects the idea that the Holy Spirit is the active agent upon the Son in the act of incarnation. That is to say, he asserts that the specific action of assuming a human nature to the Person of the Son is the action of

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<sup>59</sup> See Vol. 5, p.56-62.

<sup>60</sup> Vol. 6, p.11.



the Son and not the Spirit. However, Goodwin does ascribe the effective union of the two natures to the Work of the Spirit. The Spirit does not make the union itself, but He does make that union effective, possible.

It was the Spirit who overshadowed his mother, and, in the meanwhile, knit that indissoluble knot between our nature and the second person, and that also knit his heart unto us. It was the Spirit sanctified him in the womb.<sup>61</sup>

Although it appears that Goodwin is directly contradicting himself, I do not think he is. In the first passage he is denying that the Spirit is the agent of the incarnation, and in this second passage he is acknowledging the Spirit to be the One who makes the unity of the two natures possible. This becomes clearer when seen in the light of the following quotation:

The same person that made the man Christ partaker of the divine nature maketh us also. There is a higher correspondency yet. The Holy Ghost is *vinculum Trinitatis*, the union of the Father and the Son, as proceeding from both by way of love; and who is so meet to be the union of God and man in Christ, of Christ and men in us, as he that was the bond of union among themselves.<sup>62</sup>

Goodwin is not arguing for a kind of Spirit-adoptionism, but is trying to articulate the Work of the Spirit in making the two natures of Christ function as a unified consciousness in the One Person of Christ. Often in Goodwin when most precision is needed he has a tendency to be less than transparent. He will use terms differently in different passages while addressing the same subject or he might use a metaphor that obscures rather than enlightens.

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<sup>61</sup> Vol. 4, p.118

<sup>62</sup> Vol. 6, p.50

It is possible that his obscurity on this issue is connected to his obscurity on the question of the double procession of the Spirit. Owen definitely connects the two issues.

Owen argues that given that God always works by His Spirit and that the Spirit proceeds from the Son as well as the Father (citing Gal 4:6), then the Spirit is "the immediate operator of all divine acts of the Son himself, even on his own human nature. Whatever the Son of God wrought in, by, or upon the human nature, he did it by the Holy Ghost, who is his Spirit, as he is the Spirit of the Father".<sup>63</sup>

Goodwin views the Spirit as more distinct from the Son than is apparent in the Owen passage, and that might account for his problems in articulating his understanding of the Filioque and the Spirit's role upon or between the two natures of Christ.

#### 4. Christ's Assumption of Humanity

The Spirit prepared and sanctified the human nature of Christ for its assumption by the Eternal Son, because unless it is formed by the Holy Spirit it is a corrupt humanity:

In preparing this nature of Christ, the Holy Ghost sanctified that matter, and purified it, as goldsmiths do gold from dross. And his business being to part sin and our flesh, it was fit he should take flesh as, though once sinful, yet now sin was parted from it.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> The Works of Owen Vol. 3, (London & Edinburgh, 1852). p.162.

<sup>64</sup> Vol. 5, p.60.

The Word was made flesh, but not sinful flesh. He came only in the likeness of sinful flesh. Christ was born of the Spirit therefore He was spirit, not implicated in the sinfulness of Adam. Spirit, in Goodwin's theology, is not in opposition to corporeality, but opposed to flesh. For Goodwin Paul's teaching about the two humanities, one summed up under Adam and the other summed up under Christ, is absolutely vital to understanding what took place at the incarnation.

And therefore, though Christ be made a Son of Adam as made of that substance and matter derived from him, yet not in regard of the same manner of conveying that matter, by fleshly generation of man, which is the natural channel of conveying his image and original sin.<sup>65</sup>

The Virgin Birth is not incidental for Goodwin. It does not just form the function of a sign to indicate that someone important is being born. It is not a superfluous legend that has gathered around the origins of the Christ. Rather it is the only way by which the Holy Spirit could enable the Son to become incarnate. Without a Virgin Birth by the Holy Ghost there could be no incarnation at all.

"A body hast thou prepared for me". This statement becomes the axiom for Goodwin's incarnational theology. The Holy Spirit, acting on behalf of the Father, prepared a human body and soul for the incarnation of the Eternal Son. Though this specially formed and prepared humanity is freed from the corruption and guilt of sin, yet it is not free from the problems of fallen flesh in all its weakness.

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<sup>65</sup> Vol. 5, p.60.

Seeing he must not take sinful flesh, yet he will take the likeness of sinful flesh. He partakes of flesh and blood; and by flesh and blood are meant infirmities of all sorts, (he excepts sin only), a body passible.... He did bear our griefs, not such evils as come from the particular sins of men, but such as flowed from the common sin of man.<sup>66</sup>

So, although Goodwin assigns the act of incarnation to the Person of the Son, the Son did not of and by Himself assume a human nature to himself. He was dependent upon the Holy Spirit to prepare for him, by the overshadowing of Mary, a human nature and body, that was without inherent guilt or sin, yet shared in all the other aspects of human experience, including the effects of common sin inherent in the very make-up of the physical world since the Fall e.g. hunger, pain, tiredness.

It is useful to contrast Goodwin's Christology with that of Edward Irving, because both men seek to define a large role for the Spirit in the Work of Christ, yet both come up with quite different results. We have seen how Goodwin wishes to define as close a relationship with sinful humanity for Christ as he possibly can, yet he would not be able to go as far as Irving, who was able to say that the flesh that Christ assumed was in no way different to the rest of humanity. Superficially both Irving's and Goodwin's Christologies seem to proceed on similar lines, yet a different soteriology underlies Irving's theology. Irving sees the work of Christ as the purification of fallen humanity through a life of faith, overcoming all the power of sin, the flesh and the Devil, including death. Because Christ starts from exactly the same position as all humanity, full of the evil desires and affections of fallen humanity, Irving is able

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<sup>66</sup> Vol. 5, p.61

to use Christ as an example for Christian living in a more direct way than Goodwin is able to do.

For, if it was proper for Christ to fight the battles of flesh against the wicked spirits, in suffering, weak, and dying flesh, by the hand and help of faith alone, then it must be proper to us also; for between Him and us there is no difference, either in the inherent qualities of our flesh, or the reality of that faith whereby His flesh, the sister of the worm, was made mighty in word and deed over all the power of the enemy. There are not two kinds of flesh, "one flesh of men;" there are not two kinds of faith, "one faith." What Jesus through faith did in flesh, flesh is at all times competent to do.<sup>67</sup>

Goodwin and Irving seem to be aiming at the same goal: an account of the Person of Christ that is focused upon the Spirit's work upon His humanity, such that He is able to be fully human while retaining holiness, power and divinity. However, they are divergent in their starting points.

Goodwin could not countenance the very idea that lies at the heart of Irving's Christology; that Christ assumed a sinful, fallen human nature. Rather the Holy Spirit prepared for Christ an unfallen human nature, housed in a mortal frame. Perhaps the real point of conflict between Irving and Goodwin is in understanding the status before God of a fallen human nature, a sinful human heart. Goodwin takes the view that no matter how much a fallen human nature is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, even if it is prevented from ever producing any actual sins, yet such a human nature is still sinful and condemned before God. To feel sinful inclinations is because of a sinful heart. To possess a sinful heart is to be, forensically, sinful before God, quite regardless of one's behaviour. For Goodwin, to be condemned under the

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<sup>67</sup> The Collected Writings of Edward Irving, ed. G Carlyle, Vol.IV, (London, 1865). p539.

anger of God, alienated from the life of God is the result of possessing the fallen, corrupted humanity of Adam. The Logos could not be incarnated into such a state.

Irving sees redemption as a purification of fallen humanity, raising it up to God. This is unacceptable to Goodwin, who sees redemption as supremely about regeneration, meaning a rejection of the old lock, stock and barrel, and a recreation of a new. The old humanity must die before the new humanity may live.

That does not mean that Goodwin portrays the humanity of Christ as being some kind of perfect Superman, overflowing with a wealth of ability and gifts inherent in itself. The humanity of Christ was not at all inherently full of all the necessary qualities needed for the Work of Christ. Unfallen though this human nature was, yet it was still utterly dependent upon the Spirit's indwelling. Commenting on Isaiah 11.2 Goodwin says:

The graces of Christ as man are attributed to the Spirit, as the immediate author of them; for although the Son of God dwelt personally in the human nature, and so advanced that nature above the ordinary rank of creatures, and raised it up to that dignity and worth, yet all his habitual graces which even his soul were full of, were from the Holy Ghost.<sup>68</sup>

Although Goodwin and Irving both place a high value on the role of the Spirit in producing the virtues, gifts and graces in the life of Jesus Christ, yet they are quite dissimilar in their understanding of the Person of Christ that is thus acted upon. For Irving, Christ is a fallen human fully indwelt by the Holy Spirit. For Goodwin, the Holy Spirit fully indwelt an unfallen human nature that

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<sup>68</sup> Vol. 6, p.50.



He had prepared for the Son, that is, Christ assumed a holy human nature produced by the Holy Spirit, rather than a sinful human nature produced by sinful human parents.

I would venture to say that it appears that although both Irving and Goodwin see the task of the mediator as mediation between a holy God and an unholy humanity, Irving focuses upon the mediation between holy and unholy, whereas Goodwin focuses upon the mediation between God and humanity. It is as if Irving is fixed upon the ethical behaviour displayed by a holy person as opposed to an unholy person, without allowing the deeper questions of ontology to be raised that Goodwin never stops raising. Goodwin identifies fallen humanity with sinfulness, such that redemption must be the creation of a new humanity if holiness is to exist in Adam's race. Here we must leave the comparison between Goodwin's and Irving's Spirit-Christologies.

The Holy Spirit formed the human nature of Christ in the womb: "He made the man Jesus both body and soul". As Jesus grew up it was the Holy Spirit that gave Him an understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures and brought him to an understanding of His mission.

The second manifestation of Christ's dependence on the Spirit is at His baptism.

It was the Holy Ghost had the honour of consecrating him to be the Christ, and that by anointing him without or above measure, as John the Baptist witnessed John iii.34.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Vol. 6, p.11.

This is the most important event in the three year ministry of Jesus Christ in Goodwin's Christology. It is not that Jesus was not in possession of the Holy Spirit before this, but that now, "he was anointed with him in respect of such effects as those which appertained to the execution of his office, with a larger measure and more eminently than before". This understanding of the baptism of the Spirit as an empowering for service is a theme that can be found not only in several of the Puritans, but also in the 18th century Methodists, Irving in the 19th century and in several 20th century writers.<sup>70</sup>

Goodwin takes very seriously the prophetic passages in Isaiah which refer to the coming of the Spirit upon the Messiah. As the servant of God, Christ's dependence on the Spirit was integral to His mission. Servanthood is about lowliness and dependence, not about self-sufficiency and majesty. Goodwin attempts to show that the depth of Christ's reliance on His baptism of the Spirit is prophesied in Isaiah 11.2: "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, and the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord". The same point is argued from the prophecy of Isaiah quoted in Luke 4: 18,19, when Jesus declares it to be fulfilled in him right then and there: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord".

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<sup>70</sup> See Dr M Lloyd-Jones Joy Unspeakable and his series of sermons on Ephesians Ch 1 (London 1990).



The first point that Goodwin makes about this baptism story is that the Holy Spirit did in some sense constitute him Christ. Here we are referred to Acts 10:38 where we are told that Jesus was anointed by God, that is to say, that Jesus was the Christ in an official sense by virtue of the Spirit's anointing. Commenting on the passage from Isaiah 11 Goodwin says that "it was with power and all grace that he was anointed.... What is the Messiah, but the Most Holy One Anointed? (Daniel ix). Acts 10.38: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost". The Holy Ghost is that oil he is anointed with above his fellows; and he hath his name of Christ, which is the chief name of his person, from the Holy Ghost".<sup>71</sup>

Goodwin is in no way advocating some form of adoptionism here, as he goes on to say, "it is made the true and proper sign and token of his person's being the Son of God, that the Holy Ghost came visibly on him, and abode on him".<sup>72</sup> He received the Spirit without measure though he was personally full of grace and truth himself, as he was the Son of God.<sup>73</sup>

So, because Jesus of Nazareth was none other than the Son of God, the divine Son, who had assumed an unfallen human nature, he was able to, and had a right to, receive the Holy Spirit without measure. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit was the official ceremony of anointing that made Jesus of Nazareth the Christ, as well as being the public recognition of who He was.

The effect of this anointing for the ministry of Jesus is a particular emphasis of Goodwin

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<sup>71</sup> Vol.6, p.12

<sup>72</sup> Vol.6, p.12.

<sup>73</sup> Vol.6, p.12.

It was the Holy Ghost anointed him to all his offices, as first to be a prophet and preacher of the Gospel.... Whether you take the words *ou evekon* antecedently or consequently, either that *because* by God he was designed to be a preacher, *therefore* the Spirit was on him; or that *because* the Spirit was on him, he *therefore* was fitted to be a preacher, it comes all to one as to my purpose. The Spirit was he that made him a preacher of the gospel, to utter things which never man did, and to speak in such a manner as man never did.<sup>74</sup>

Because he was anointed as the Christ, this entailed being anointed to the offices of prophet, priest and king. However, in the time leading up to his death, he was to exercise his prophetic ministry. Jesus could preach deliverance to the captives etc., because he was anointed by the Spirit. His message was powerful and effective only because the Spirit was upon Him. He who was the Word in flesh, needed the Spirit to make His words effective.

These passages from Isaiah, together with Acts 10:38 ("He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, going about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil") enable Goodwin to say, "the Holy Ghost anointed him with power to do all his miracles and all the good that he did".<sup>75</sup>

This is a valuable Christological point. In classical Christology the miracles and good works in the life of Christ are taken to be signs of His divinity. However, Goodwin sees them as evidences that He was fully indwelt by the Spirit. The problems caused by seeing the miracles as evidences of Christ's divine nature are many and deep. It is at this point that a classical

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<sup>74</sup> Vol.6, p.12

<sup>75</sup> Vol. 6, p.12

two-nature Christology becomes so unrealistic. When certain actions are attributed to the divine nature and other actions are attributed to the human nature, a concept of a single, coherent Person is very difficult to maintain. "Person" becomes a kind of neutral arena where these two natures carry out their respective tasks as each is required. The unity of the Person, of the consciousness, is difficult to maintain so long as Christology is reduced to the explanation of the two natures without reference to a thoroughly Trinitarian setting.

Goodwin's emphasis does much to overcome these problems. Jesus Christ has the status of a man as well as the status of God, yet lives his incarnate life as a man. The miracles and good works are done because of the Holy Spirit indwelling Him, as could be done by any human person so indwelt.

Goodwin also draws attention to Matt 12.28 where Jesus is said to cast out devils by the Spirit. Again this focuses on the humanity of Jesus Christ, that His power over devils was not an example of His divinity, but of His being fully indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This is not to say that His divinity was in terms of the full indwelling of the Spirit, because Goodwin maintains a very strict allegiance to a two-nature Christology. However, the divinity of Jesus Christ is not necessarily revealed in the miraculous or the authoritative. Christ's dependence on the Spirit is focused at the very points that normally furnish 'proofs of divinity. The wisdom, understanding, knowledge, might, fear of the Lord, preaching, teaching, miracles, compassion of Jesus are ascribed to the work of the Spirit, not the divine nature of Christ. His dependence on the Spirit is profound. Goodwin reminds his reader that the whole reason for the Spirit's descent upon Jesus was to equip Him for the execution of His mediatorial offices, as prophet, priest and king.

George Smeaton, a late 19th century Scottish theologian takes up this Spirit-Christology in a magnificent book on The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Addressing this issue of Christ being equipped for His Work he says that He had a full consciousness of divine Sonship awakened and perpetually sustained by the Holy Spirit.<sup>76</sup>

Jesus of Nazareth was not an individual who needed no guidance and direction in His life: "The light of Christ's understanding, the holy purity and the unswerving obedience of his will, the exercise of all his faculties and powers in religious things, were due to the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit of God, giving him the full consciousness that he was the eternal son, and authority to act as such in all his words and works".<sup>77</sup>

Goodwin takes Romans 8:11 to show that it was the Holy Spirit who was the immediate cause of Christ's resurrection. It was the Holy Spirit who raised Christ up into a re-created, new, immortal body, free from corruption and weakness.

It was the Holy Spirit who glorified Christ at His ascension. He was finally and fully anointed with the Spirit, and in this is His glorification. Commenting on Acts 2:33-36 Goodwin argues that Christ "being at the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit has thus been made both Lord and Christ".<sup>78</sup> The Lordship of the ascended

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<sup>76</sup> See Smeaton, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, (Edinburgh, 1974). pp.122-146.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. p.139

<sup>78</sup> Vol.6, p.13

Christ is due to his having received the promise of the Spirit. "It was the Holy Ghost that solemnly anointed him as king in heaven".<sup>79</sup>

Turning now to a more usual instance of Christ's dependence on the Holy Spirit, Goodwin says,

[I]t was and is the Holy Ghost that proclaims him Christ in all men's hearts, He sets the crown upon him there also, as well as in heaven, in so much as no man could ever come to acknowledge him the Christ but from the Spirit (I Cor. xii.3). So as whatever right he had in his person, or by his Father's designation, yet it is the Spirit that publicly proclaimed him such, brought him in all subjects.<sup>80</sup>

Finally, Christ's dependence on the Spirit comes out most strikingly and thoroughly in Goodwin's most popular work The Heart of Christ in Heaven unto Sinners on Earth.<sup>81</sup> The purpose of this treatise was to counter the belief that those that had been able to deal with Jesus Christ whilst he was on earth had a great advantage over Christians in the post-apostolic Age, because Christ was now glorified and less affected towards humanity. The sub-title of the Treatise is "The Glorious Disposition and tender affection of

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<sup>79</sup> Vol.6, p13.

<sup>80</sup> Vol.6, p.13.

<sup>81</sup> W.R. Nichol claimed that "Goodwin's treatise was the most formative factor in the development and popularization of the highly mystical Roman Catholic devotion of the Sacred Heart"(British Weekly, June 9th, 1898). This has been dealt with most adequately by Rev. Paul Cook at the Westminster Conference of 1980, where he shows that "though the seed-thought of the Roman Catholic devotion may have originated with Goodwin, there is nothing in Goodwin's treatise to justify any worship or devotion to the physical heart of Christ. Goodwin uses the phrase metaphysically to signify the feelings and emotions of Christ".

Christ in His Humane Nature now in glory unto His members under all sorts of infirmities, either of sin or misery". Goodwin goes on,

The scope and use whereof will be this, to hearten and encourage believers to come more boldly unto the throne of grace, unto such a Saviour and High Priest, when they shall know how sweetly and tenderly his heart, though he is now in glory, is inclined towards them.<sup>82</sup>

In this treatise the third demonstration of Christ's heart towards sinners is that "if the same Spirit that was upon him, and in him, when he was on earth, doth but still rest upon him now he is in heaven, then those dispositions must needs still rest entirely upon him".<sup>83</sup>

Goodwin first shows that the Spirit dwelling in him concurs to make his heart "graciously affected to sinners".

It was the Spirit that rested upon him above measure, and fitted him with a meek spirit for the works of his mediation; and indeed for this very grace sake of meekness did the Spirit come more especially upon him.<sup>84</sup>

The fact that the Spirit came as a dove is of great significance for Goodwin:

All apparitions that God at any time made of himself, were not so much to shew what God is in himself, as how he is affected

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<sup>82</sup> Vol. 4, p.95.

<sup>83</sup> Vol. 4, p.118.

<sup>84</sup> Vol. 4, p.118

towards us.... So here, this shape of a dove resting upon him was to show those special gracious dispositions wherewith the Holy Ghost fitted Jesus Christ to be the mediator.. [A dove] was a fit emblem to express what a frame and temper of Spirit the Holy Ghost did, upon this his descending on him, fill the heart of Christ.<sup>85</sup>

He was filled with the Holy Spirit, to that end to raise up in him sweet affections towards sinners.<sup>86</sup>

Having shown, quite exhaustively, that one of the effects of the Holy Spirit's indwelling of Christ was to make Him sympathetic, loving and caring towards sinful humanity, Goodwin goes on to show that this same Spirit "doth still abide on him in heaven".

Although the Spirit rested upon him here without measure in comparison of us, yet it may be safely said, that the Spirit, in respect of his effects in gifts of grace and glory, rests more abundantly on him in heaven than he did on earth,<sup>87</sup>

Now the implication of all this is that the human nature of Christ may well have been exempt from imputed guilt of sin and sinful corruption, but it was not, of itself, overflowing with love towards humanity. Real love and care for sinful humanity, that pities but does not excuse, is a work of the Holy Spirit, and as a human being, Christ was reliant upon this work being carried out in him. We will see in a later chapter that Goodwin will not allow nature to have its own independent, self-contained existence, and this seems to apply equally well to the human nature of Christ. The incarnation, then, meant a limitation of

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<sup>85</sup> Vol. 4, p.118

<sup>86</sup> Vol. 4, p.120.

<sup>87</sup> Vol. 4, p.120.

the Eternal Son, not only with respect to his divine power and displayed glory, but also with respect to His divine attitudes towards humanity. The human Jesus of Nazareth needed the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to bring about an adequate compassion towards sinful humanity to complete His mission. The incarnation was the Eternal Son really becoming a man; a man who depended upon the Holy Spirit not only for the miraculous healings and exorcisms, but also for the good works of kindness and compassion that were so basic to his continual ministry. Even the emotional life of Jesus relied on the Spirit for it to be what it must be for the Person and Work of the Incarnate Christ.

Here we have a different picture of Christ emerging from that portrayed by classical Christology. Goodwin is not frightened off by the idea of Christ's humanity, but neither does he injure Christ's divinity.

It is fair to say that Goodwin's account of the person of Christ is separated from the modern mind by the achievements of psychology. Today we are not happy with a definition of the person of Christ that ignores the practical consciousness of a man. To talk in terms of two natures and one person is helpful in purely theological terms, but it does not give a very satisfactory result in terms of a single consciousness. We have seen the hesitancy in Goodwin to develop the theme of the Spirit providing the psychological framework for the two natures to operate. George Smeaton takes up this Spirit-Christology and translates it into a more modern form:

The Spirit was given him, in consequence of the personal union, in a measure which no mere man could possess, constituting the link between the deity and humanity, perpetually imparting the full consciousness of his personality, and making him inwardly aware of his divine Sonship at all times... the full consciousness that he was the only son of God who came from and went to



God, flowed perpetually from the Spirit. The communication from the one nature to the other was by the Spirit.<sup>88</sup>

This is a remarkably valuable step forward in understanding the personal consciousness of Jesus Christ. It means that the subject of the incarnation is the Son, but the incarnation is essentially a Trinitarian enterprise. The Son took to Himself a human nature and limited himself to a merely human life. However, in so doing He made Himself wholly dependent on the Holy Spirit for guidance, inspiration, compassion, power, wisdom and an appreciation of His divine relationship to the Father. Jesus was no double-minded individual who could draw upon His divine nature whenever He needed to. No, He was a man, who was also God; yet God who was really human. His divine nature could not be but a part of His psychological make-up, as this would in practice be a kind of schizophrenia. Two natures used in that way would inevitably mean two consciousnesses within one Person. However, Jesus was clearly a man, a human consciousness. We also know that He was the Second Person of the Trinity. Thus, the concept of the communication of the two natures being by the Spirit is of vital significance. The unity of consciousness in the man Christ Jesus was achieved by the Spirit bringing to his human consciousness an awareness of who He was, and the ability, knowledge and emotion to perform all the tasks needful to His mission.

Goodwin had all the conceptual tools at hand for a much larger statement of this than he ever attempted. We will see later that His developed thinking on the sealing of the Spirit actually addresses this question of the self-awareness of Jesus. The sealing of the Spirit is an immediate testimony by the Spirit of the Christian's divine sonship, and this sealing is supremely

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<sup>88</sup> Smeaton, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. (Edinburgh, 1988), p.133 & 134

carried out in Jesus at His Baptism when the Father and the Spirit authenticate the Unique Divine Sonship of the Incarnate Son. Thus, who He was, was known in relation to the Father. His "being the Son in relation to the Father" was the real essence of how He saw Himself, as is made clear in the Gospel narratives.

The real question at stake in the matter of the Spirit providing the union of the two natures is whether it is the Person of Christ who is the proper subject of the Spirit's indwelling or whether it is the humanity, considered in isolation that is the object of the Spirit's work. Goodwin seems to put this question beyond all doubt in The Heart of Christ, when he so clearly and definitely portrays the risen, ascended, glorified and enthroned Lord as the subject of His ongoing, eternal indwelling. That enthroned Lord is none other than the God-man Christ, who will forever require the Work of the Spirit upon His consciousness, bestowing all the glorious gifts and graces of the effulgence of the Divine Life.

Jurgen Moltmann in The Way of Jesus Christ says,

If Christology starts by way of Pneumatology this offers the approach for a Trinitarian Christology, in which the being of Jesus Christ is from the very outset a being-in-relationship, and where his actions are from the very beginning inter-actions, and his efficacies co-efficacies.<sup>89</sup>

However, Moltmann attempts to present a Spirit-Christology in opposition to two-nature Christology. That seems to be a mistake, because as helpful as many of his theological investigations are, Moltmann is unable to

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<sup>89</sup> Moltmann, The Way of Jesus Christ, (London, 1990) p.74.

give an account of the Person of Christ. As one reads him one finds it very difficult to pin down exactly who Jesus Christ is.

Moltmann provides 4 criticisms of traditional two-nature Christology, but instead of trying to resolve them with his Spirit-Christology, he rejects two-nature Christology out-right.

His first criticism is that "if the eternal Logos assumed a non-personal human nature, he cannot then be viewed as a historical person, and we cannot talk about 'Jesus of Nazareth'"<sup>90</sup>. Now, with classic Christology this is a very real problem, because it is difficult to construct a convincing historical, human person from the bare data of Chalcedon. However, Goodwin sees the incarnation as the assumption by the Son of human nature into personal union with himself. The Son remains God in himself, but does more than merely enter a relationship with a human nature. The Son, in taking to Himself all aspects of human nature, becomes a true man, a real historical person. Because of His dependence upon the Spirit, rather than a dependence upon His divine nature, He is able to become a human person in a full, historical sense.

Moltmann's second criticism is that "if the eternal Logos has assumed a human nature without sin, then he is immortal not merely in his divine nature, but in his human nature too, since mortality is a consequence of sin".<sup>91</sup> Goodwin deals with this problem by showing that Christ took to himself the consequences of sin and the Fall - mortality, sorrow, pain and suffering - in his body, yet remained sinless and holy in His Person. Holiness does not reside

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid. p.51

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. p.51

in the divine nature as opposed to the human nature, but in the Person. Goodwin goes so far as to say that death was not natural to Christ at all, and that he had to die actively, not like the rest of humanity who must passively accept death when it comes.

Moltmann's third criticism is that "in the framework of two-nature Christology, all statements about the lowliness of Jesus, his humanity, his suffering, and his death on the Cross are reduced in favour of statements about his divinity, his exaltation and his triumph, and are integrated into these".<sup>92</sup> Whereas there is truth in this criticism when it is applied to much classical two-nature Christology, it will not stick in the best of Puritan two-nature Spirit-Christology. By so profoundly asserting Christ's dependence on the Spirit Goodwin is not forced to reduce statements about humanity in favour of statements about divinity. Christ did not live a human life buoyed up by His divine nature. Rather, the Holy Spirit informed and supported Him as was necessary for His mission as a full human. Moltmann is not alone in seeing the emotional life of God as being true of the very heart of God, God in Himself. Only a static, "philosophical" view of the divine nature will militate against the suffering and lowliness of the Cross. Goodwin, writing some 300 years earlier, is just as capable as Moltmann of speaking about the genuine emotion and grief in the heart of God:

For, first, was not Christ, who never knew the pleasure of sin, put to grief? Yea, all the sorrow and smart was his: Isa. liii.4, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs', was 'a man of sorrow,' &c. Which sorrows were put upon him by his Father also: ver. 10, 'He put him to grief;' and therein put himself to grief. And if they both were thus put to grief and afflicted, for our reconciliation and peace, then surely the least that we, who have tasted of,

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid. p.52.

and enjoyed the pleasures of sin can do, is to grieve also, for that thing which made both Father and Son to grieve.<sup>93</sup>

The grief of the Spirit too is shown in Goodwin's comparison of the incarnation of Christ and the work of the Spirit with human hearts.

The fourth criticism of two-nature Christology by Moltmann is that it is drawn from a general metaphysical view of the world, rather than from the particular history of Jesus. "His faithfulness is transformed into a substantial immutability, his zeal, his love, his compassion - in short his 'pathos', his capacity for feeling - are supplanted by the essential apathy of the divine. The passion of his love and its capacity for suffering can no longer be stated".<sup>94</sup> This, again, is a very powerful criticism of much classical two-nature Christology, but because Goodwin is not afraid to allow Christ to enter fully into the experience of human life without referring to a hidden divine transcendence, he is happy to talk of the genuine 'pathos' of Christ. Goodwin's work on The Human Heart of Christ in Heaven unto Sinners on Earth is in itself a refutation of Moltmann's criticism. Besides all these considerations, Goodwin does not really share that Platonic<sup>①</sup>Aristotelian conception of God which can be found in certain aspects of classical theology, with its immutable, timeless, apathetic God. Goodwin learnt his theology, right from his earliest youth, from the Biblical revelation of God, and would not have encountered a philosophical conception of God, in a formal and explicit sense until he was in his mid-teens. He did not cut his teeth at the feet of the philosophers, but immersed himself in learning the words of the Bible. He was described as a "walking Bible". All this shows through in his eagerness to

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<sup>93</sup> Vol.6, p.129.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. p.53.

portray the pathos, the passion, the excitement and feeling within the very heart of the communion of the divine persons in eternity.

Moltmann is right to point out the weaknesses in classical two-nature Christology, and also realizes the need for a more Biblically informed Spirit-Christology, but he over-reacts against the one and tries to confine himself only to the other. Goodwin keeps the two-nature framework as an essential basis for understanding the person of Christ, but goes on to remedy the weakness of a purely incarnational Christology by emphasizing the necessity of the Work of the Spirit upon the Person of Christ, both in His earthly life and in His ascended glory.

In much classical Christology there is a tendency for the incarnation to be understood as the inter-play between the human and divine natures, and the Holy Spirit is only invoked, if at all, to deal with the Virgin Birth. This inevitably leads to an inhuman humanity. To ascribe miracles and special knowledge to the intervention of the divine nature will result in an unstable, double consciousness in Jesus. Further, if Jesus did not experience the limitations of human existence as we experience them, then can He really be said to have been made like us? Sin is not an essential aspect of humanity, but limitation and weakness is. If Jesus is to be seen as a Second Adam, the federal head of a new humanity then He must at least be human.

It is possible to say that classical Christology is too - dare we say - Christocentric to understand Christ correctly. Ironically, Christ becomes incomprehensible if He is reduced to just Himself. The person of Christ can be understood only in relation to the Spirit, as the One who enabled (and enables) the Son to be effectively incarnate, and in relation to the Father as the One who sent Him and who receives Him back again.

## 5. The Personalism of Goodwin's Pneumatology

Goodwin's central belief about the Spirit is that He is a Person. Throughout his theology there is a constant warmth of personal relationship between the believer and the Persons of God. Having examined the way in which the Spirit works upon Christ, the Church and the individual believer, he turns his attention to applying or drawing out practical implications of his theological constructions.

There is a fellowship of the Father, and a fellowship of the Son, in the souls of every believer. But the Holy Ghost, though he hath been universally acknowledged as a person equal to either, yet we do not hold and pursue after fellowship with him as a distinct person.<sup>95</sup>

Is this the inevitable fruit of Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity? Seeing the Spirit as a relationship does tend to reduce Him to the non-personal, given that a relationship is not a person. Yet, Goodwin employs that Augustinian model on about half a dozen occasions in his volume on the Spirit. It seems to inform his Pneumatology in some way, yet I doubt that anyone has a more personal view of the Spirit.

If we believe he is a person in the Trinity, let us treat with him as a person, apply ourselves to him as a person, glorify him in our hearts as a person, dart forth beams of special and peculiar love to, and converse with him as a person. Let us fear to grieve him.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Vol.6, p.39

<sup>96</sup> Vol.6, p.39.

The question of immediate experiences of God the Spirit must be touched on here, although a full treatment of the subject will be left until the question of the sealing of the Spirit in the chapter on epistemology. Goodwin constantly refers to immediate encounters with and experiences of God, of each of the three Persons. We must be very clear about what he has in mind when he says this. He is not talking about the experiences popular in the mystical tradition. He is not talking about visions, voices or violent fits. He is not talking about dreams, special instructions from an unseen messenger, automatic writing, healings, levitation, astral projection, miraculous pyrotechnics, introverted self-actualization, glimpses of heaven, dates for the Eschaton or any other of the weird and wonderful claims that have tended to be associated with those who talk of immediate encounters with God. Goodwin would not even be a member of the Charismatic movement were he alive today, because he is strictly cessationist in his exegesis of 1 Corinthians 12-14. What Goodwin is talking about is personal encounters with God by His Spirit, during which the character and personality of God is deeply impressed upon the soul encountered.

Do you profess to hold communion and converse with the saints? I beseech you, have it with the maker of them, the Holy Ghost; and this not at second hand, by having fellowship with those he dwells in, but immediately also with himself.<sup>97</sup>

Romans 15.30 "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me". Goodwin sees that Paul can exhort on the basis of the "love of the Spirit", meaning both His love for us and our love for Him. Using the Augustinian model, he defines the essential character of the Spirit as love:

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<sup>97</sup> Vol.6, p.39.



He proceeds from them by way of love, and love in them mutually each to other is the original of his person. And as he is the love that is between them both, so it is he who sheds abroad the love of both into our hearts: and it is he who is grieved, as a friend or person that loves us (as Eph. iv. 30), when we sin, or neglect that duty which is his care and charge to work in us.<sup>98</sup>

As an appendix to the discussion of the Filioque it is important to note that Goodwin does see the Spirit as effectively conveying the Persons, feelings and intentions of the Father and the Son to the individual Christian. The Trinity may indwell in the Christian's heart precisely because the Spirit proceeds from both Father and Son. "The grace of Christ, and the love of God the Father", are revealed to us by the communion of the Holy Ghost (2 Cor. 16:13). Only the Spirit knows the deep things of God. He has overheard everything that the Father and the Son have ever discussed concerning human redemption. Thus it is that the Christian may come to know the mind of the Father and the Son."<sup>99</sup> However, this does not necessarily rule out the theory stated, that Goodwin sees an ontological Trinity of single procession, and a "dispensatory" Trinity of double procession, as may be seen in the following quotation where the indwelling of the Son in His humanity also conveys the presence of the Father and the Spirit.

Yea, the other two persons are said to dwell in us, and the Godhead itself, because the Holy Ghost dwells in us, he being the person that makes entry, and takes possession first, in the name and for the use of the other two, and so bringeth them in..... [T]heir indwelling in us is attributed to his. The truth is, that it is in this union of ours with God, as in that of Christ; that look, as in the union of the man Jesus unto the Son of God, and in the indwelling of the Son of God in that human nature, the Son

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<sup>98</sup> Vol.6, p.40.

<sup>99</sup> See Vol.6, p.51.

of God first and originally dwells there, and he dwelling therein, the Father is in the man, and the Spirit is in him, and he in the Father; so it here in this subordinate union of ours that the third person comes as the first inmate in us, and he taking possession, the other two come in and take up their abode also.<sup>100</sup>

Goodwin sees that the real treasure of the Spirit is not His Work, but His Person.

There is a gift of his person, first and chiefly, or primarily; but secondarily of his graces, to be wrought in us by him. And in this gift of his person doth consist the greatness, the richness of the gift.... And thus you are to look at the gift of the person of the Spirit more than all his charismata, or gifts.<sup>101</sup>

In Acts 10:45 it is the gift of the Spirit that comes upon the Church, not the gifts of the Spirit. It is the gift "as one absolute, full and entire gift, once given for all; his person containing virtually all other parcels and particular gifts, which he after works".<sup>102</sup> The indwelling Third Person must be *with* His graces, but it is not *by* His graces. "[H]is person is given to dwell in us immediately and for ever, and his graces secondarily".

Our persons (bodies and souls) are the temples of his person immediately; his graces are the hangings, the furniture that he may dwell like himself, *ut habitet decore*, that he may dwell handsomely.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Vol.6, p.65.

<sup>101</sup> Vol.6, p.58.

<sup>102</sup> Vol.6, p.59.

<sup>103</sup> Vol.6, p.63.

Goodwin traces this gift of the Person of the Spirit back to the covenant of grace, in which all that is in God is made over to His people. All the attributes and Persons that are God are given to the covenant people.

I use to say that the covenant of grace is in all the transactions a covenant of persons.<sup>104</sup> In Romans 8 vv 12, 13 we are told that the Christian is in debt to the Spirit and not to the flesh. Why? Because He has done so much, and does do so much, for the Christian.

The obligation here, you see, runs in the Spirit's name, the arrest is at his suit. Debtors then we are, and infinitely indebted to him, and this for dwelling in us; and because we are led and guided by him, as a person that loves us, are we wonderfully beholden unto him. And those next words, 'As many as are led by the Spirit,' directs us to treat with him as with a person, a familiar, a friend, that walks with us, takes us by the hand, talks to you, adviseth you as a Spirit of counsel (as, Isa. xi. 2, he is called), continually speaking in us, 'This is God's way, walk in it'.<sup>105</sup>

The *koinonia* of the Spirit is that fellowship and communion with the Spirit that Goodwin has just defined. In Psalm 143.10 David remarks how the Spirit is good and prays that he will be led by him. This shows, to Goodwin, that he had "an experimental sense of sweet familiarity and converse with the Spirit of God".<sup>106</sup> The Christian is to have daily encounter with the Spirit, immediate and direct fellowship with that third Person of the Trinity. This leads Goodwin on to consider the relative difficulty of the Work of the Spirit as compared to the Work of the Son.

Christ's love was in dying, the Spirit's is shewn in his indwelling us... But that the greatness of his love and grace may appear unto us, and we may put a due value upon it, let us compare it

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<sup>104</sup> Vol.6, p.59.

<sup>105</sup> Vol.6, p.40.

<sup>106</sup> Vol.6, p.41.

with the love of Christ himself in being incarnate, and dwelling in our nature for us. You account it infinite love in him to leave the bosom of his Father, to come down from heaven, and become one person with a man, to be made flesh, and so to be made less than the Father in that respect..... And yet set this grace of the Holy Ghost's indwelling in us by it, and it riseth up unto an equality; and though it fall lower in some respects, yet exceeding that of Christ in others, the scales will be acknowledged even.<sup>107</sup>

The Work of the Spirit is less than Christ's in that the union between the Spirit and the Christian is not a personal one. Yet it is as near as it possibly may be. "It is an immediate union of our persons to and with his person, so as to have an eternal right personal to each other, and everlastingly to dwell each in other".<sup>108</sup> If this union had been any closer, becoming a personal union, then the Spirit would have become defiled by our "defilements" which would have been imputed to His Person.

The Spirit's indwelling is equal to Christ's incarnation in two respects. 1. In 1 Pet. 1:12 the Spirit is said to come down from heaven, just as the Son did. 2. The Spirit indwells the Christian forever - "He is in us; and shall be with us married as indivisibly without all divorce, as the Son of God and that human nature are also".<sup>109</sup>

But, there are ways in which the Work of the Spirit exceeds the Work of the Son.

(1.) That though indeed the Son of God dwelt and dwells thus intimately in a human nature, yet it is a nature made holy, harmless, separate from sin and sinners, Heb. vii. But this good

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<sup>107</sup> Vol.6, p.41.

<sup>108</sup> Vol.6, p.41.

<sup>109</sup> Vol.6, p.41.

Spirit's lot and part is to come at first into hearts full of defilements, into rags of uncleanness, into flesh that is and hath wholly corrupted itself.<sup>110</sup>

Secondly, although Christ had to mix with a whole world full of sinful people, suffering "daily such contradictions of sinners"<sup>111</sup>, yet this "contradiction" was only external to him. However, the Spirit's indwelling is in sinful human hearts. Christ dwells in our hearts only by faith, but the Spirit actually dwells in us.

Now the contradiction which he by reason of this near inhabitation endures must needs be greater and quicker to his sense, from those he dwells thus within, and hath entered into,.. than that of outward converse, which Christ only endured.<sup>112</sup>

Only the Spirit is said to be grieved, an emotion that is deep, and implies a great nearness to the one who has caused such upset. "A father (as God the Father) is offended, but a familiar friend is grieved". Right from the beginning of the world the Spirit has had to suffer the grief of striving with the hearts of sinful humanity (Gen 6). In the days of Noah He relieved Himself of His striving by using the flood to destroy all but eight of the human race, but when he indwells the Christian He can have no such relief, "for he hath eternally undertaken for them".<sup>113</sup> His work is constantly spoiled in the Christian's heart. Any good work that He accomplishes in setting the heart in a Godly disposition will be ruined by the Christian's continuing in sin.

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<sup>110</sup> Vol.6, p.42.

<sup>111</sup> Vol.6, p.42.

<sup>112</sup> Vol.6, p.42.

<sup>113</sup> Vol.6, p.42.

And is it nothing, think you, to have his work continually spoiled? Never to find the soul as he left it? To have that heart he dwells in continually resisting and contradicting of him? To have that unspun in the night which he had woven in the day? To have made a good prayer in us, and that swept away, as if it were but a cobweb, by lust that riseth? To have his greatest enemy, the devil, blaspheme him and his graces, in his own house, in his own hearing?<sup>114</sup>

This is why the Spirit longs for the Eschaton, for the final relief from all the striving He has had to endure. This is why in Rev. 22 the Spirit says "Come" to Christ. The Church longs for the Eschaton that she may enjoy her husband for ever, but the Spirit longs to be eased of his burden. "He groans to be unburdened of this conflict with sinful hearts".

We move on now to look at Goodwin's epistemology, because he has invested so much time and effort into describing the various aspects of the noetic affects of sin. In epistemology we find the work of the Spirit manifested in a whole variety of ways, from a general underwriting of human knowledge, to the personal assurance of the Christian of their relationship to the Father.

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<sup>114</sup> Vol..6, p.42.

## Chapter 2

### The Holy Spirit in the Epistemology of Thomas Goodwin

#### 1. General Epistemology

To talk of a general epistemology is a difficult, problematic and controversial task to undertake. I use the term 'general epistemology' to cover the investigation of the knowing processes of human beings, whether they are Christian or not. To even state the issue in this way is to be open to a variety of preliminary attacks and questions from certain Christian epistemologists. I begin with an examination of the theological issues surrounding a general epistemology to pave the way for an examination of Goodwin's epistemology at its widest, most inclusive level, before, in the following two sections, narrowing the field down to Christian epistemology, and then to the specific question in Christian epistemology of assurance.

#### 2. Introduction

The doctrine of creation forms the foundation for a general epistemology.<sup>115</sup> One must grapple with the basic concept of the first act of creation and the history of the creation in order to formulate an adequate, comprehensive account of human knowing. It has been said that a failure in one's creation theology will ruin any attempt to account for knowledge in the human subject. Cornelius Van Til, begins his analysis of Christian epistemology with a clear statement of his creation theology:

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<sup>115</sup> The Biblical Creation Society, in its manifesto, includes the clause that creation is "the foundational, though not central, doctrine of Christianity".

The doctrine of creation says that the whole spatio-temporal world owes its existence to the will of God. What is true with respect to the whole space-time world is equally true with respect to the meaning of it. As the absolute and independent existence of God determined the derivative existence of the universe, so the absolute meaning that God has for Himself implies that the meaning of every fact in the universe must be related to God..... Applying this to the question of man's knowledge of facts, it may be said that for the human mind to know any fact truly, it must presuppose the existence of God and His plan for the universe.<sup>116</sup>

Thus, our examination of Goodwin's general epistemology is inevitably an examination of Goodwin's understanding of creation and the history of creation.

However, as we begin we are challenged to give an account of the concept of general, universal knowledge, the content of which is appropriate and applicable to all inquirers using a universal methodology. Such an idea, as we have, in principle, already seen, is bound up with a notion of general revelation. The very idea of general revelation has been too contested a term throughout this century for it to be used without some form of apology.

Emil Brunner, in Nature and Grace, makes the distinction between God's general revelation and human receptivity.

According to St. Paul the revelation of God in his creation would be sufficient for everyone to know therein the Creator according to his majesty and wisdom. But sin dulls man's sight so much that instead of God he 'knows' or 'fancies' gods. We may correctly characterize the objective and subjective factors thus: man misrepresents the revelation of God in creation and turns it into idols. In any case he is unable to know God, who in Jesus

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<sup>116</sup> Cornelius Van Til, Introduction to Systematic Theology, (Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 1974) p.22



Christ reveals himself to him anew according to his true nature, which even in creation is partially hidden.<sup>117</sup>

However, the time when this distinction between general and special revelation could be taken for granted is long gone, certainly in Reformed circles of theology. In Barth's reply to Brunner he strongly opposes the whole tenor and basis of Brunner's formulation:

Is it [Brunner's] opinion that idolatry is but a somewhat imperfect preparatory stage of the service of the true God? Is the function of the revelation of God merely that of leading us from one step to the next within the all-embracing reality of divine revelation? Moreover, how can Brunner maintain that a real knowledge of the true God, however imperfect it may be (and what knowledge of God is not imperfect?) does not bring salvation? And if we really do know the true God from His creation without Christ and without the Holy Spirit - if this is so, how can it be said that the *imago* is materially 'entirely lost', that in the matters of the proclamation of the Church Scripture is the only norm, and that man can do nothing towards his own salvation? ... Shall we not have to do what Roman Catholic theology has always done and ascribe to him a *potentia oboedientialis* which he possesses from creation and retains in spite of sin?.<sup>118</sup>

Barth wishes to take the Reformation doctrines of original sin, total depravity, and justification through faith by grace alone all very seriously. He argues that there can be no back-entrance into knowledge of God, no residual knowledge, no incomplete Fall. He argues that any attempt to establish a general revelation will end in natural theology and a destruction of the fundamental character of Christian revelation, which is salvific.

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<sup>117</sup> Barth, K and Brunner, E. Natural Theology, (London, 1946) p.26

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p.82

This, then is a most serious accusation. If the concept of general revelation casts a dark shadow of relativity over the revelation of Jesus Christ, then great care must be taken. If general epistemology is founded upon some kind of general revelation, then it is crucial that a clear doctrine of general revelation is stated. At the same time the doctrine of general revelation must not be so formulated that a harmful natural theology is created that will undermine and catastrophically weaken the unique, definitive revelation in Jesus Christ.

Barth believes that general revelation leads to natural theology, because it presupposes of humanity a capacity to inform itself about God, the world and humanity as a whole. Such a foundation will make humanity relatively autonomous in true knowledge, and God's revelatory work becomes supplementary to human self-discovery, natural science and theological-science. If God is so revealed outside of Jesus Christ then the newness and once-for-all character of Christ is fatally damaged. For Barth, revelation cannot concern common knowledge which is given for public and historical inspection: it is something new, which was not, is not, could not be known in any other manner whatsoever. One must first know revelation in Jesus Christ before one can know or perceive revelation anywhere else.

We cannot. from the standpoint of a previously clarified conception of God, or of a previously clarified anthropology, understand what it means when in the New Testament the Son of God is called Jesus of Nazareth, and Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God; nor yet from a previously clarified general conception of incarnation, nor in the light of some general truth regarding a paradoxical unity of God and man. No general idea has any relevance here.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Barth, Church Dogmatics, Volume I.2, (Edinburgh, 1956) pp.12-14

The creation cannot authoritatively and authentically reveal God to us, because it does not have the ultimate authority and absoluteness of God Himself. It is at most the herald of the King, not the King Himself. The Self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ cannot be one revelation alongside others, albeit the best one.

Barth's concern is that we do not even theorize about knowing God in a way apart from grace. The revelation of God in Jesus Christ is from God to us without prologue or introduction. As soon as we say that God is knowable, we are already speaking about the grace of God, because it is only through His grace that He can be known. For Barth natural theology is an attempt to bypass Jesus Christ: it is an attempt to know the essence of God, without knowing Him as the Father of Jesus Christ.

The first article of faith in God the Father and His work is not a sort of 'forecourt' of the Gentiles, a realm in which Christians and Jews and Gentiles, believers and unbelievers are beside one another and to some extent stand together in the presence of a reality concerning which there might be some measure of agreement, in describing it as the work of God the Creator. What the meaning of God the Creator is and what is involved in the work of creation, is itself not less hidden from us men than everything else that is contained in the Confession. We are not nearer to believing in God the Creator, than we are to believing that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. It is not the case that the truth about God the Creator is directly accessible to us and that only the truth of the second article needs a revelation.<sup>120</sup>

We cannot know God simply as Creator: to attempt to do so can only be an attempt by the natural man to justify himself. This kind of natural

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<sup>120</sup> Barth, Dogmatics in Outline, (London, 1949) p.50. See also Church Dogmatics, III.1, pp.3-41

theology presupposes that humanity is already open to God, and that God is already revealed to humanity.

Barth takes this matter so seriously that he has caused the ontic and the noetic aspects of general revelation to be collapsed into one idea. He appears to refuse to entertain the possibility of there being a revelation that humanity will not acknowledge because of the corruption of sin. Barth seems to simply rule out any kind of general revelation because he believes that it unavoidably leads to natural theology.<sup>121</sup> Because Barth has made revelation and salvation virtually synonymous, he automatically sees any doctrine that finds revelation outside of Jesus Christ as a doctrine that rejects the necessity of grace for the human person.

Brunner came to see conscience as part of the natural make-up of the human person, thus (allegedly) opening the door to a natural morality that can be worked out in advance of, if not quite apart from, the revelation of Jesus Christ. Does Brunner then lead us back into the Babylonish captivity of the invention of Anti-Christ by giving the sinful human enough inherent power to at least prepare for, if not search out, God in Jesus Christ? This question will be picked up again at the end of the chapter.

### 3. The General Epistemology of Goodwin

Thomas Goodwin builds upon and crucially develops the foundations laid by Calvin in the field of the general revelation of God in the creation. By carefully spelling out what it was for God to create the original creation, what

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<sup>121</sup> However, Alan Torrance has argued that Barth is resistant to natural theology only as an *a priori*. A natural theology worked out *a posteriori* may well be possible.

kind of a place it was in terms of morality, divine fellowship and knowledge, Goodwin is able to give a good account of the original ability of human nature in its first state. This enables him to discover the ruin that sin has inflicted upon the Creation, especially in the human person, in the Fall. In working all this out Goodwin insists that God has not only revealed Himself in a general way in the Creation, but that God actually enables His fallen, corrupt creatures to perceive this revelation for themselves. Yet, even having said all that, Goodwin allows no natural theology. No natural human being is able to come to a knowledge of God apart from them being confronted by the revelation in Christ Jesus.

Goodwin is keen not to limit the revealing sovereignty of God to the specific revelation in the incarnate Jesus Christ, nor to undermine His sovereignty by opening the door to a natural theology. By insisting upon God's objective revelation in creation and by insisting upon the noetic consequences of sin, Goodwin separates the noetic aspects from the ontic aspects of revelation, and thus does not fall into the dangers that Barth so vehemently warned of.

His assertion of a definite, objective general revelation in no way sets up a natural theology as an independent way of knowing God. God is revealed in creation, but only known in Jesus Christ.

#### 4. The Background to Goodwin's thought

Having examined the modern theological concerns in relation to the concept of 'general revelation', it is now necessary to paint the theological background to Goodwin's theology.

Roman Catholic natural theology, with its nature\grace dualism provides the foil against which Goodwin's thought is set. Although it would be misleading to suggest that Thomas Goodwin wholly escaped the dualism that had characterized mediaeval scholasticism, it would be more misleading to see Goodwin as uncritically following the patterns laid down before him. Building on the principles rediscovered by Calvin, but not fully developed by him, Goodwin begins to overturn the nature\grace dualism that had so muddled the realm of epistemology.

Herman Dooyeweerd comments on the tragedy of this dualism in Christian thought:

The dialectical ground-motive of nature and grace made its entry into Christian scholasticism. This occurred in the period of the Aristotelian Renaissance, in which after a bitter struggle, the Augustinian-Platonic school was pushed out of the dominating position that it had hitherto enjoyed. Roman Catholicism now strove consciously to effect a religious synthesis between the Greek view of nature (especially the Aristotelian) and the doctrines of the Christian Faith... This synthesis standpoint found its most powerful philosophical and theological expression in the system of THOMAS AQUINAS. The two foundational tenets of this system were the positing of the autonomy of natural reason in the entire sphere of natural knowledge, and the thesis that nature is the understructure of super-natural grace.<sup>122</sup>

To make such a theological decision inevitably took Aquinas down the road of natural theology. He saw philosophy as the achievement of the natural light of reason and, of course, made it relatively free of revealed theology.

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122 H. Dooyeweerd, A New Critique of Theoretical Thought, (London 1968) Vol. 1, p.179

Creation, thus, becomes a natural truth in itself. This truth can be seen and proved by human rationality apart from a divine special revelation.

The Unmoved Mover of Thomistic natural theology is not the same Subject as the Living, Personal, Triune God who has created, loved and redeemed. No-one can doubt the intellectual achievement of Aquinas's Summa, yet it is possible to doubt that he has achieved an authentically New Testament understanding of the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only does the doctrine of God suffer, but humanity is conceived as a material body with a rational soul, which was given a supernatural aspect as an original gift of grace. Thus, the Fall is deprived of its radical significance. Sin brought about the loss of the supernatural gift of grace, but it did not cause a corruption of human nature itself. Human ability was injured, but not destroyed, by the loss of the *donum superadditum*. Aquinas set up a synthesis between nature and grace which was to provide the underlying assumption for a whole age of Christian thought.

It is this crippling dualism that Goodwin seeks to break - a dualism that has continued to plague theology right down to the modern day.

In Goodwin we see a rejection of the concept of the autonomous sphere of knowledge in the fallen creation. Without destroying nature, he swamps nature with grace, so that he can conceive of the new creation as a creation of grace: a unified, single realm with one sphere of knowledge. This new creation is the creature of the Holy Spirit and Goodwin can even say that the Spirit is to the new creation what the Logos is to the first creation (without him nothing exists that does exist). Goodwin is concerned to show the discontinuity between the realm and influence of sin (not nature), over against the realm and influence of grace. Sinful nature cannot provide a foundation

for, or an introduction to, the upper story of grace: sin ruins and effectively disables, it does not injure or merely damage. The Enlightenment with its radical dialectic of nature and freedom would have been impossible in Goodwin's thought. He was far too sceptical of the fallen human mind to ascribe to it either the ultimacy of the Enlightenment or the epistemological powers of the natural theology of Roman Catholicism. This Roman natural theology caused Goodwin to describe in graphic detail the way in which sin has caused a corruption of humanity's reasoning powers. It is not that a different kind of logic applies now, but that there is a spiritual antipathy to thinking in a Godly manner! That is to say the epistemological barrier between sinful humanity and God lies not in the intellect or reason *per se*, but in the affections, the inclinations of the human heart. It is interesting to note that for the Roman theologian God is a mystery because He is hidden, whereas for Goodwin He is a mystery because He is holy. With these guiding principles Goodwin's Pneumatology is carefully placed as the foundation of all epistemology, yet no move towards Hegelian immanentism is made, precisely because of those same principles.

Thomas Goodwin, as we shall now see, evacuates fallen nature of all its ability, and relativises the value of pure nature with a high view of renewed, regenerated nature in the Christian. Regeneration is the primary work of the Spirit, and as such puts the Spirit in the centre of all epistemological questions. For Goodwin philosophy can never be a prolegomenon to theology as it is in the classic nature\grace dualism. The world is the arena of God's sovereign activity and all knowledge and goodness within it is from Him: there can be no realm of knowledge that is independent of God's Holy Spirit in His general work in humanity.



## 5. Goodwin's Doctrine Of Creation

He at first created us in a pure and natural condition in Adam, and he the first of mankind; to let us see our *imum* ... what by the law of creation it was our due, and how remote we were by that due from the glory he supernaturally in Christ, the Second Adam, had intended... Then he lets us fall into sin and wrath, which utterly spoiled and defaced that first natural native beauty we had by creation, and plunged us into a contrary depth of misery. But then, after that again, he gives forth the gospel which discovers Christ as a redeemer from sin and wrath, who withal brings a life and immortality to light, which by faith apprehended by us, puts us into a state of grace, and a participation of Christ, such as is suitable to the relation of the Gospel in this life, far exceeding Adam's state.<sup>123</sup>

Thus, Goodwin gives a brief summary of God's plan of redemptive history. If he knows of such a thing as natural theology it can only apply to the unfallen Adam in a state of sinless natural creation, when he was in a state of spiritual peace with God. However, this state of "pure nature" is not as good as the state of the new humanity which is in Christ. Adam was the flesh and blood forerunner in his created perfection, yet the spiritual Man had still to come.

It is worth noting at this point that in Goodwin's theology the act of creation was an entirely Trinitarian activity:

The Father is said to 'create all things by Jesus Christ' Eph 3:9. And the Son is said to create Heb 1:8-10; 'Unto the Son he says, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, and God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands'. And the Holy Ghost is said to create, 'Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they

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<sup>123</sup> Vol.7, p.34

are created; and Thou renewest the face of the earth', Psalm 104:30.... It may be said that Elohim the Father created, and Elohim the Son created etc., creation being an action that is common to the persons jointly.<sup>124</sup>

Volume VII of the works of Goodwin contains a long treatise on the state of the creation when God had first created it, before the Fall. In this work Goodwin carefully sets out what this 'pure nature' was.

The first estate I would term, upon many accounts, the estate of pure nature by creation law.... I may style this goodness by creation man's original estate, and ours and Adam's first natural estate, in that holiness and righteousness, as we did come forth of God's hands. And if Adam had stood and his children had been begotten holy of him (which is supposable by the law of creation they might have been), it might have been said of them, that they had been holy and righteous by nature, as truly as the apostle doth the contrary speaking of men now fallen, that they are 'children of wrath by nature'; yea, this latter is founded upon the former.... And as of us it would have been said, that we had that holiness by our creation, although we had received it from natural generation from him... yea, and it was given by creation to convey it to us by birth, and in that respect it might and should have been termed their primitive, first, original, natural condition in him, and his children to be begotten by him.<sup>125</sup>

In this way Goodwin sets up the concept of created nature as an order, a system of life and being, in harmony with the Creator. The creation that came from God's hands was good, holy and righteous. Yet, this natural goodness was in the context of the Trinity. We shall see later in his thought that Goodwin shows how original humanity was actually created in anticipation of, or even in the image of, the Proper Man, Jesus Christ. It is not as if nature is a realm quite apart from the mediation and Lordship of Jesus Christ, which

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<sup>124</sup> Vol. 4, pp. 353-355

<sup>125</sup> Vol. 7, p.23

has within it, of itself, a capacity or suitability to harmony with God. This realm of righteous nature was the condition that we would be in were it not for humanity's fall into sin and the continued, ever deepening, rebellion in sin that characterizes contemporary human life alienated from God as it is.

Inevitably then we turn our attention to an examination of the first human being, Adam, to see what God's good creation was like in its original state, and, more particularly, to discover what Adam's position was in relation to general revelation and natural theology. The place of the Holy Spirit in a theologian's formulation of the unfallen state is extremely significant. Clues to the inner motifs of their whole theology can be found in such an analysis.

God created Adam with all that was "due" to him, given that he was a creature in a physical universe i.e. he was well equipped to live happily in fellowship with his Maker.

First, that if God would create intelligent natures out of nothing, it became him to endow them with his own image of holiness etc., whereby they might be able to know, to love and to enjoy communion with him, and happiness from himself, as their chiefest good: which, as it was God's bountiful gift to bestow, so the very nature of such a creature required it as convenient, meet and suitable to its nature, and without which it had been imperfect, yea, miserable, for otherwise those vast faculties of understanding and will had been left empty, and like a hungry stomach continually craving, when it hath only crumbs of food and drops of weak water. Nor could they otherwise have attained their main end, or arrived at their convenient happiness, which the very natures of them were constituted and fitted for, which can be filled with nothing but a communion with God.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Vol.7, p.24

In this way Goodwin rejects the idea of an independent, autonomous natural realm. God created humanity for Himself and humanity was purpose-built for this end. Nature is created, not to be self-consistent or self-sufficient, but to find its *raison d'être*, even its very self-understanding from the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>127</sup>

Adam's faculties of reason, understanding and will were created in him to enable him to commune with God in the happiness of the unfallen, created state. However, these rational faculties were not to be exercised in a moral vacuum: they could only be exercised rightly according to an inward principle, a divine disposition in each faculty *viz.* the law of God written upon the human heart by creation. Reason, as a tool, was not destroyed, but the competence of its human user was destroyed.

And surely, if the things of the law are said, by nature, to be written in man's heart, now fallen, this is but a shadow of that full and perfect, exact copy of the whole and holy law, which was then man's nature much more.<sup>128</sup>

Reason is not an instrument of ethical neutrality, in the way that the Enlightenment conceived of it. It is only used correctly when it is guided according to the holy character of God. Such a guiding principle was graciously put into Adam by creation, and even still there is some faint relic of it, preserved by the Spirit, to stand as an accusing reminder of humanity's origin.

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<sup>127</sup><sup>13</sup> Like Barth, Goodwin does not want to develop an anthropology in advance of his theology, as if one had access to an uninterpreted account of humanity. Humanity-in-itself is an ontological impossibility. In a qualified sense we can speak of God-in-Himself in a way that we could never do with humanity. See *Church Dogmatics*, I/1, pp. 196-197.

<sup>128</sup><sup>14</sup> Vol.7, p.24

Goodwin answers the Socinian argument that if humanity had really received the image of God, then humanity would have been immutably holy "for God's holiness is an immutable holiness in Him".

But God could not communicate to us his essential holiness... and all the images that are made of man do not impart a communication of his nature, but of his likeness. And so God begat his Son indeed who is his substantial image, but the image of God in creatures is not so.<sup>129</sup>

So then, what was the nature of the holiness of Adam that was in him when he came from his Maker's hand? Holiness was not inherent in the creature as creature. To say this would be to fall inevitably into a natural theology, because the Fall did not destroy the creaturely character of human existence. Goodwin is careful at this point.

The holiness, which by creation, both angels and men had, were but adjuncts, accidents and endowments, perfecting the well-being of them, and bestowed upon them to perfect their nature as noble qualities and dispositions use to do. But they were not ingredients constitutive of the natures of them, or any part or ingredient unto the essence of them, and yet natural to them, as perfectives of their nature.<sup>130</sup>

This distinction occurs at several places in Goodwin's theology. He talks of things being natural to the human person even though these things are not part of their basic essential make-up. This seems to suggest that there is a kind of directedness about the creation. Nature is not in opposition

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<sup>129</sup> Vol. 7, p.28

<sup>130</sup> Vol. 7, p.33

to grace, but is in harmony with it, in its unfallen condition. One could almost say that nature itself is in the context of grace.<sup>131</sup>

Although Goodwin describes holiness as "perfective" of human nature, he is not agreeing with Thomistic nature\grace dualism, as will become clear as we follow Goodwin's argument through creation and fall. Whenever he uses the term "pure nature", he is referring not to mere nature or nature alone, but to uncorrupted nature, nature as it was before sin entered in. He uses 'pure' in a moral, not an ontological sense.

Goodwin is keen to describe and delimit the quality of Adam's first state. It is very important to see the cosmos as God created it, so that we can appreciate the "vanity" that it has been subjected to with the entrance of sin by Adam. Again, the importance of seeing the Fall as a real, historical event underlies all of Goodwin's theology. If Bultmann's project of demythologizing has not been accepted as a whole, it appears that most theologians have employed it to some extent in their handling of Creation and Fall. Goodwin would argue that such a procedure must inevitably lead to a demythologizing of Redemption too, given that Redemption, set in the full history of Jesus Christ, overturns the Fall and recreates the universe in a new, redeemed, perfected and glorified way. Thus, to ground his doctrine of the Fall and the doctrine of Redemption, Goodwin goes to great lengths to describe the actual created state of Adam, before there was any sin in the universe.

To give, therefore, a small taste of this happiness of Adam:

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<sup>131</sup> Because Goodwin makes the Holy Spirit the epistemological link between subject and object in the creation, there could never be a realm of nature considered as self-consistent from the realm of grace/supernature as such.

No sooner did he open his eyes, but he saw himself most happy. He had a world about him new made, and in its freshness and best hue, and furnished with all sorts of creatures, and all of them suited to his body, and to his sense, as well inward as outward, so to estate him in the fullness of all contentment. And he was made the centre of all goodness that was in those creatures: unto whom each of them, as unto their Lord, was fitted to pay a tribute of comfort: so suited was this little and great world together.<sup>132</sup>

This theme of the human person being a microcosm of the cosmos is of significance in Goodwin's thought. It provides the basis for not only his general epistemology, but also for his attempt to overcome the classic epistemological problems that lie in the confrontation between the object and the subject. <sup>133</sup>

And then God gave him a soul, able to search into, and so to know, the natures of all creatures (for he gave names to all), which as Plato said of him who first did this, argued him to be *sapientissimus*, and much more able than Solomon was he to discern of all things, and so to see God clearly in each of them, whom then, looking into his heart, he found by the covenant of works to be his God, from whence issued an unmixed peace and joy.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Vol. 7, p.41

<sup>133</sup> Of course, the post-modern rejection of a strict subject-object relation in epistemology is hardly anticipated by Goodwin, but his awareness of the inherently ethical nature of the knowing processes is certainly of relevance to the post-modern hermeneutical debate. One finds, both in texts and the world, what one is ethically disposed to see, that is to say, data may be interpreted in radically different ways according to [possibly undeclared] ethical commitments. When Goodwin extends this to the much more fundamental question of one's relationship to the Creator, serious epistemological consequences must follow. To [approximately] share the Creator's judgement of the creation is to be in an inherently successful epistemological relationship to the creation. To be alienated from the life of God cannot be without far-reaching epistemological implications for one's reading of text, world and self.

<sup>134</sup> Vol. 7, p.42

It is at this point that Goodwin becomes most useful, epistemologically speaking. The classic problems of epistemology are potentially resolved by taking the creatureliness of humanity sufficiently seriously. The basic epistemological problem flows from the question of how the knowing subject may be related to the object of knowledge.<sup>135</sup>

What Goodwin seems to be saying is that God made humanity, originally, with a mind fitted to know the cosmos, and he made the cosmos fitted for the human mind to know. In other words the mental categories employed by the human mind, the rationality that governs all human thought, the method of receiving and ordering our sensory input, all this really does bear a relation to the cosmos itself. This sounds such a vast claim, and yet once the doctrine of creation has been grasped it is to be expected. Thus, we cannot know exhaustively, but we can truly know. We have the epistemological basis, by creation, to know truly, to discover, to explore, to utilize, to enjoy, to care for the cosmos itself.

Human knowledge is possible because we are made by the same Creator who made the very cosmos. The same rationale that pervades the fabric of everything in the universe was also imprinted upon the human mind. Even though humanity has been profoundly affected by the Fall, as too has

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<sup>135</sup> See N.T. Wright, The New Testament and the People of God, (London, 1994) pp.29-143, for a thorough treatment of the issues involved in this debate. Essentially the conclusion of critical realism is that the absolute categories of subject and object are dead-ends, but that a critical to-and-fro between subject and object can give real knowledge. Epistemology must reject the old Enlightenment Cartesian angst about 'absolute certainties', determined by some kind of universal rationality. The inherent connectedness of subject and object must be acknowledged without dissolving the object down to states of mind of the subject. N.T. Wright draws attention to the essentially ethical relationship between humanity and the rest of creation, rather than beginning with an epistemological relation.



the cosmos itself, yet the principles or categories of reason remain even if they are no longer guided and illumined by the Indwelling Holy Spirit of holiness, righteousness and obedience to God. It is not reason that has been ruined by sin, but the reasoner.

Adam's reasonable soul had all the world in it subjective and it had all the world in it objective, that is, there is no excellency that is in the world which he had not in him inherent. Nor is there any excellency or comfort in the world, but that he had something in him to take it in suited to it, and to take comfort from it.... he is called therefore a little world. He had a world made for him; he had a world in him.<sup>136</sup>

Thus, Goodwin's epistemology is founded upon his conception of the original creation of humanity and the original state of the creation. Adam was designed to know and understand the creation and the creation was designed to be known and used by Adam. However, this was not an ethically neutral enterprise, and it is the failure to spell this out sufficiently clearly that lies behind the way in which Christian theology has been used as some sort of cloak for environmental hooliganism. God's creation was revelatory of God, and Adam was equipped intellectually, morally and spiritually to perceive and learn from this revelation of God. In a very real, and entirely non-pantheistic sense, Adam's attitude to and care for the cosmos, with all the creatures in it, was intimately tied up with his fellowship with God. The purity of his mind and heart, together with his suitability to the cosmos (and *vice versa*), meant that God's revelation of Himself in His creation was available for Adam as a document of the character of God. So, Goodwin clearly has room for a particular kind of natural theology.

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<sup>136</sup> Vol. 7, pp.98-99

Now when it is said that there is a natural way of knowing God, the meaning is not that of natural knowledge in corrupt nature which heathens have of God; but it hath reference to the pure nature in Adam uncorrupted, whereof that natural light left even in corrupt nature is but the shadow.<sup>137</sup>

.... which shews that there was such a kind of knowledge of God in Adam, in an holy and perfect way, which knowledge of his the schoolmen call Adam's *theologia naturalis*, his natural divinity and knowledge.

And oppositely, a supernatural knowing God is not so called in respect of corrupt nature, as being supernatural to it, but in respect to pure nature, as being above the natural way thereof.<sup>138</sup>

Goodwin is very careful to make himself quite clear as to the nature of this natural theology. It can apply only to Adam in his original state and not to humanity in its fallen and corrupted state. There was a depth of knowledge of God revealed in His creation that was accessible to the pure, uncorrupted human mind that God had created for the purpose of reading that revelation. Today both the cosmos and the human mind have suffered change through sin. The cosmos has become subject to "vanity", which seems to entail something to do with the production of weeds, inefficiency, decay, suffering, disease, disasters and death. The human mind has become ethically incapable of reading God from His creation. In our physical aspect we suffer the consequences of living in a universe whose quality of life is described as flesh i.e. temporal, fleeting, vain. This is not to downgrade the creation, but to allow the full effects of sin to be felt or described in terms of their cosmic dimension. Yet, the fundamental aspect of sin upon humanity is actually in the human heart, in the basic directedness of fallen human life. Sinful humanity is

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<sup>137</sup> Vol. 7, p.44

<sup>138</sup> Vol. 7, p.44

against God in its lifestyle and thought in that sin has set humanity on a course directed away from God. It is for this reason that the general revelation of God in the creation is unable to produce a natural theology in the sinful human mind.

However, Goodwin seems to introduce another category of knowledge called supernatural knowledge. He defines this as not necessary for the true understanding of the natural world, that is to say, a kind of knowledge that addresses spiritual matters only. However, in the story of Adam and Eve, which provides Goodwin with the basic outline of his creation theology, God had to reveal the meaning of the tree in the centre of the garden supernaturally. God had to reveal supernaturally what he wanted them to do and not to do.

Goodwin falls short of an integrated, holistic conception of revelation, but he does not fall into a merely rationalistic conception. Goodwin rightly rejects an ontologically closed-off natural world, and, in fact, he also rejects the notion of a self-sufficient world of knowledge too, but he does not integrate the creation with its Creator in a satisfactory manner. As we see his theology unfold we will note how he rejects any idea of nature functioning apart from the power of God.

In the following quotation we shall see how Goodwin tries to reduce Adam's theology into a purely natural one. (Yet, within 20 pages he realizes that this is not possible and seeks to qualify this earlier position).

That knowledge and enjoyment of God was natural, which was suited, fitted and proportioned to the natural way of man in his knowledge of things. So as that light that enabled him to know God was suited and made apt to close with the natural way and

his understanding, only it did withal sanctify it. But that knowledge is supernatural which is by a light above the way of nature, and the way of man's understanding, as the light of our faith is..... [T]he ordinary way of Adam's knowing God lay, if not wholly, yet for the most part, within the sphere and compass of the natural way; that is, so far as was simply due to a creature reasonable and was such as was also suited to the natural way of man's understanding and knowledge, though withal sanctifying of him.<sup>139</sup>

Even in this quotation Goodwin is unable to confine the knowing of God to "a natural way", but nevertheless he is still restrained within a nature\grace framework. Goodwin's antipathy to supernatural revelation for Adam can only be accounted for in this way, because his inner logic and direction is to overturn the nature\grace dualism of Aquinas.

Goodwin conceives of the image of God as a stamp, effective by the Holy Spirit, upon human nature, that enabled Adam to know God in a way that followed the same method and principles that Adam used to know any subject. That is far from his final word on the *imago Dei*, but at this stage in his argument he is seeking to uncover the inner principles of Adam's knowing processes.

And unto that end God, in the instant of his creation, did sow in his mind holy and sanctifying notions and principles, both concerning his own nature, what a God he was, and also concerning his will, even as he did the like common notions of the knowledge of other things; which principles were, by rectified reason, to be improved, enlarged and confirmed, made clear and illustrious, out of the observations from the creatures and the works of providence, as also from the covenant of works, till it arise to a full, clear and distinct knowledge of God, whom, as thus known, he should have enjoyed and delighted in.... Thus,

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<sup>139</sup> Vol. 7, p.45

as he was to till the Garden of Eden, so was he to till and manure his own mind.<sup>140</sup>

This image, although ending rather humorously, is a graphic illustration of Goodwin's conception of the epistemological basis from which the human mind was supposed to act. It was to be a process of development and discovery, but governed by Godly inner principles which were actuated by the Holy Spirit, fed by the self-revelation of God in the creation. This applied not only to the knowledge of God, but also "common notions of the knowledge of other things". Human beings were equipped to know, because they were in harmony with God.

Adam, then, was able to attain a perfect, natural knowledge of God according to the principles put within him, enlightened by the Spirit and according to the general revelation of God. Even in fallen nature there is a shadow of these principles, an imperfect copy, in all mankind to remain as a witness to the original image that was stamped on Adam.<sup>141</sup>

Thus, to love God above all, to believe on Him etc., was to Adam but the dictates of pure nature, by way of common principles which met with answerable holy dispositions.<sup>142</sup>

Goodwin carefully defines Adam's knowledge of moral law. He sees it as written upon Adam's heart in his creation, as part of his natural principles. Adam, thus, knew how he ought to behave before his Creator without any "supernatural" revelation. Romans 1 & 2 (according to Goodwin's exegesis)

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<sup>140</sup> Vol. 7, p46

<sup>141</sup> See Vol.7, p47

<sup>142</sup> Vol.7, p47

shows us how this moral knowledge remains in an imperfect form within humanity, condemning all for the universal rejection of God. This is a most important point. This moral law within does not lead to a natural knowing of God, because of the moral corruption in the fallen human heart. Such a heart does not respond lovingly or enthusiastically to the moral principles left within by God. On the contrary, there is a more reprehensible rejection of the holy character of God.

Goodwin goes to great lengths to show that Adam's knowledge was only natural in sphere and method.

As the way of his knowing God, and the image of God in him, were thus natural and no higher than was due unto nature, and suited unto man as man, so were all things else which any way concerned him; they were of the same elevation also, and reached no higher than the sphere of nature, in the sense explained, namely that they were such as were due unto man's nature or were founded upon the law of nature.<sup>143</sup>

The Covenant of Works that he stood under was entirely natural. The righteousness whereby he was justified was entirely natural. The reward for this righteousness was entirely natural.

Goodwin is so committed to understanding Adam's state as 'nature' that even the direct communications from God were not according to faith, but natural. By this he means that they required no spiritual enlightenment to hear or respond to, but that they came to Adam according to his innate, natural, created powers. How?

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<sup>143</sup> Vol. 7, p.49

For man being a sociable creature, in that he was reasonable, made in the image of God, which was natural, it was meet he should be able to converse with that great God by mutual speech, as well as with his wife, or any other intelligent nature..... Therefore now to believe God when he speaks to him, and to receive his testimony, was but the power of an inbred light.<sup>144</sup>

This enables Goodwin to reach the rather unusual conclusion that although Adam received "supernatural" information, that he could not have gained for himself with all his great God-given natural powers, yet this faith "may well be resolved into natural light as the first principle and foundation of it". Goodwin rejects the scholastic idea that Adam had a supernatural addition on top of his natural powers, that enabled him to pursue supernatural righteousness by grace through faith. No, Adam did not need to see the spiritual realm, so he did not ever have the supernatural faith of the Christian. Adam's relationship with God was carried out in and through the Creation, in all its original created glory. Adam did not sit in the heavenlies with Christ, or spiritually approach the Holiest of Holies of God's presence in the spiritual temple that was shadowed by an earthly arrangement in the Pentateuch. Adam met with God in the setting of the created "earthly" universe. We will see later how Goodwin finds the contrast between the first, "earthly" Adam and the second "spiritual" Adam central to his explanation of redemptive history.

The foundation of all Adam's knowledge of God was an inbred light..... was but natural. But that light whereby we see 'the things of the Gospel' is termed glorious and so wholly supernatural.... The light of the glory of God in the face of Christ

is a further glory than what shined in the creation, and therefore requires a further light to see it.<sup>145</sup>

We are encouraged to note that when Stephen saw Christ in heaven, he was full of the Holy Ghost i.e. there was added to him a further light and ability than the inbred light of sight or of the sun. It is as if in Goodwin's scheme of the purpose and goal of history, the natural creation must give way to the spiritual creation, one which is filled with the presence of God the Holy Spirit, manifesting God to the creatures.

Schleiermacher, in his monumental work The Christian Faith, attempts to describe the world of human experience as it is in the world now in a way not unlike that in which Goodwin tries to describe the original creation of 'pure nature'. Goodwin seeks to describe the unfallen creation in a non-supernatural way, believing that the integrity of the Christian revelation would be compromised by anything else. Schleiermacher is concerned to describe Christianity in a way that is consistent with the basic make-up and principles that exist in humanity by Creation. These two seemingly contradictory approaches actually find a common methodology in explaining these two different ages of the history of the cosmos. Both men seek to explain the occurrences they are faced with in naturalistic terms: Goodwin with the special, personal, direct words from God to Adam in the garden; Schleiermacher with the Incarnation of God in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Goodwin will go to great lengths to explain the occurrences and experiences of the Garden in a way that does not involve a directly supernatural revelation. In the end he is forced to admit that supernatural

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<sup>145</sup> Vol.7, p.61



occurrences happened, but he will allow them only as unusual or rare events of an otherwise entirely natural way of knowing. Goodwin abandons his Edenic anthropology for describing fallen humanity and redeemed humanity. Now a new state of affairs has arisen in which sinful humanity is incapable of any kind of useful life at any level, so the supernatural intervention of God, constantly undergirding fallen human life, is essential. Redeemed humanity lives in a spiritual nature, a renewed nature which is defined as 'super-natural', beyond and above the previous nature, even in its unfallen perfection.

Schleiermacher is so committed to the natural integrity of the creation, and human life in particular, as it is now, that he finds any description of an original, perfect creation and a prehistoric fall eludes him. Since theology is an explication of the Christian self-consciousness there does not appear to be a great deal of raw material out of which a doctrine of Creation can be formulated. When Schleiermacher tries to understand the Genesis narrative in the manner in which Goodwin does, he is quite lost and bewildered in his attempt to understand what kind of consciousness Adam and Eve possessed to make them behave in the way they did, and what role Satan could have in all this. Thus, he concludes that they possessed the same human nature as we have (allowing for the story to be taken 'literally'), and were far from the perfect state of 'pure' nature that Goodwin describes.

The understanding must have been involved in an utterly heathen darkness before it could have credited a falsehood to the effect that God grudged man the knowledge of good, and the will must have lacked the energy to resist even the weakest enticement if the mere sight of the forbidden fruit could exert such power over it. In fact, Adam must have been sundered from God before his first sin; for, when Eve handed him the fruit he ate it without even recalling the divine interdict; and this presupposes a like corruption of nature; for surely incorrupt

nature could not have indulged appetite in express disobedience to the divine command.....<sup>146</sup>

This somewhat lengthy diversion has been to highlight the way in which the same incident is approached by two minds that are both committed to interpreting it, in some sense, in a 'natural' way, and yet describing it in such opposed ways. We can conclude that an attempt to account for the full range of Christian material in terms of only 'nature', however sophisticated the conception of nature is, will fall into inevitable inconsistencies.

Thus in Goodwin, Adam did not have a supernatural knowledge of God, which 'doth differ from natural knowledge of God in this, that the one is a seeing him in his work and effects only from an inbred light of his attributes, the other is a seeing God though obscurely in Himself'.<sup>147</sup>

As in heaven we see 'light in God's light' Ps. 36:9, and so a further light than any here, so here we see Christ and God by the Spirit's light and representation, though of a lower kind than that whereby we shall see him in heaven and not by natural light as it would present God to us, or take God up from his creatures..... The light of glory will be God's light immediately; he both the object and the efficient, 'all in all'.... This is the Spirit in us.... and therein we are more passive than active, through the subject of it, and that of Adam's inbred light had less of God's light in it, he not being enlightened by His Spirit of revelation, but left to that inbred light to judge and give an assent to the things objected afore him.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, (Edinburgh, 1989) pp. 297-298. See also pp.62-66 for a discussion of the non-supernatural character of the Incarnation.

<sup>147</sup> Vol.7, p.58

<sup>148</sup> Vol.7, p.62. Goodwin is not recanting his view of nature. He is referring to the work of the Spirit in His work of redemption. Adam also needed the work of the Spirit to actualize the microcosm within him to bring it into connection with the world around him

However, the light of supernatural faith does not destroy the light of reason and nature. No, it subordinates it to itself. This is worthy of attention. Nature is not perfected by grace, nor are the two set in opposition as if one were determined and the other free. Nature is the context for the operation of grace: it is the material that grace takes up to bring about the divine goal.

God possesseth and clotheth the natural powers of the mind with a higher light than ever bred in us, through the revelation of the Spirit, and converts them all, as its engines, to get a further knowledge by.<sup>149</sup>

The nature that was created by the Holy Spirit of God is the nature that is re-created by that same Spirit. The One who creates is the One who regenerates. The Creator is the Redeemer. He takes created nature, and a fallen nature at that, and makes of it the spiritual incorruptible creation that is described in I Corinthians 15, and that we see briefly walk the earth between the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ.

Goodwin acknowledges that the faith that Adam occasionally had could be either 'natural' or 'supernatural', but it was a private, irregular grace, whereas to the Christian it is a general, ever-present grace.

All knowledge is let in by it; every truth is sealed by it; it is advanced to the supreme office, to be the general instructor; whereas the light of nature and sanctified reason was then the predominant principle for reason is predominant in man's nature as he is a man, as faith is in a Christian.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Vol.7, p.64

<sup>150</sup> Vol.7, p.67

So Adam, whereas he lived in the works of God, studying God in them, conversing with God in them, his task being, by observation, to till the seeds of light sown in his mind, as well as to till the earth.... God did now and then make an apparition to utter some word of faith. Now, therefore, if the comparison be made between his estate and ours (if it be granted that he had like faith with us), it must withal be granted that the difference is as great as between a man that once-a-week makes a meal of more than ordinary fare, and a king that fares deliciously every day;.... What was extraordinary in him is ordinary in us.<sup>151</sup>

We have a profound revelation of God bound up in the person of Christ. Adam could never have known this profound revelation, a revelation that is described as an exact representation of God, the very radiance of the Father's glory. Faith opens up a whole new world of spiritual objects of knowledge, which exceeds the range of knowledge of mere nature by as much as the Second Adam transcends the first. Goodwin's heart-beat is for the setting forth of Christ in all His majesty and uniqueness. He, like Barth, is concerned to set out the theological system in such a way that there is no danger of seeing Christ as simply better than others, or the greatest in a class of revelation. There is in Christ a qualitatively different kind of theological knowledge revealed to the regenerate mind.

In Christ a new Indies is discovered, a new treasure broken up which Adam should never have heard of.<sup>152</sup>

This world of the works of God in the natural creation was Adam's epistemological range and basis. He was created with the intellectual and moral principles for knowing and understanding the world in which he lived, a

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<sup>151</sup> Vol. 7, p.68

<sup>152</sup> Vol.7, p.69

world unknowable in a non-relational, rationalistic-scientific kind of way, but only [self-consciously] as the handiwork of his Creator with whom he enjoyed joy and peace.

However, before we assess this model, we will briefly note Adam's ontological relation to Christ as the Second Adam. We will hear much more of this when we consider Goodwin's soteriology.

God appointed Adam, as to be a public person to convey to his posterity what he should do or be, so further also, to be type of another Adam who was to come after him, namely, Jesus Christ.<sup>153</sup>

Christ was first, and more principally intended of the two; for Adam being but as the type, and so the more imperfect every way, Christ, the Second Adam, must needs be not only at the same time with him intended, but primarily and in the first place; for so it is in all types else, their antitype is that for which they are ordained, and they are but 'figures for the present' (Heb 9:9), and so are but subordinate to their anti-type, as first and chiefly intended.<sup>154</sup>

God's manner of proceeding in his works being to begin *ab imperfectionibus*, with what is imperfect, and so go on *ad perfectiora*, to what is more perfect.<sup>155</sup>

Thus, Goodwin sets up Adam, and in fact all of Adam's experience, as an imperfect shadow of what was and is Christ's experience. Just as Adam had a way of knowing which was natural to him, so Christ's way of knowing is also natural to Him, yet far transcends Adam's way. Adam's epistemological

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<sup>153</sup> Vol.7, p.71

<sup>154</sup> Vol.7, p.85

<sup>155</sup> Vol.7, p.86

range is limited to the objects of nature which reveal God to him according to his attributes and works. Christ has all that open to him also (i.e. a true reading of the open book of nature); but his field of vision also encompasses the spiritual world itself. Adam sees the material world directly and the spiritual realm indirectly: Christ takes in the whole of reality in his vision, spiritual and material. It is only in Christ, then, that Goodwin loses his vestiges of nature\grace dualism. In Christ, there is in effect, but one mode of knowledge, one realm of knowledge, one set of criteria for understanding every aspect of experience and reality.

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So, what is it possible to know, in the sense of general epistemology? The answer is, the content of general revelation.

What, then, is the content of general revelation? According to Goodwin it is the nature of God, explained through the actions of God. It includes an understanding of the natural world, the creation, in that humanity was created to correspond with the whole creation, and vice versa. It includes a profound moral knowledge mediated through the light of conscience. It includes knowledge of a covenant of works, whereby obedience to God brings rewards of life, peace and divine communion.

Thus, the general revelation contains a wide range of knowledge for the human mind to lay hold of. In this Goodwin would oppose Barth: the creation contains an ontic revelation both of God and the creation itself. Note that for Goodwin general revelation does not refer only to God, but also to the creation itself: if God had not made the human mind to correspond to the creation then it would have been unknowable. In this way Goodwin is taking the first tentative steps onto a non-dualistic understanding of epistemology. However, because Goodwin sharply divides the noetic and ontic aspects of general

revelation, the scope of his general epistemology is now only half surveyed. Goodwin goes to great lengths to delineate the breadth and depth of the effects of sin upon the world, the human spirit and the human mind. Because of the human rebellion against God humanity has lost the capacity to handle the general revelation. An ethical or spiritual barrier has arisen in the human mind and will barring the correct appropriation of the general revelation. For Goodwin true knowledge of the creation, let alone knowledge of God, is not possible to the fallen, sinful, human mind. Fallen humanity needs to be carried by the grace of God just to make any kind of life possible.<sup>156</sup>

## 6. Goodwin's Doctrine of the Fallen Creation

As we come to examine Goodwin's explanation of epistemology in fallen nature we will see that he attempted so to infuse nature with grace, that nature is almost swallowed up in grace. He is grappling profoundly with this question of nature and grace. He can see the spectre of the Enlightenment on the horizon, so he argues strongly against any kind of autonomy of nature. He does this by locating all 'natural' order, power and knowledge ultimately in the realm of God's grace.

It is as Goodwin gets to grips with the universe as we now find it, created, fallen and being redeemed, that the work of the Holy Spirit comes into

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<sup>156</sup> Aquinas, in Qu.109 of the *Summa*, article 1, states that every truth uttered by a man comes from the Holy Spirit. By this he means that unless the Spirit activates human nature it is unable to gain any knowledge of any kind. Supernatural knowledge requires a further disposition on top of nature. Although Thomas also wants to make the Spirit the true ground of all knowledge, yet he differs quite significantly from Goodwin, who strongly denies that fallen human nature still possesses the principles for true understanding within. For Goodwin the Spirit must stand in for the lack of ability in fallen human nature, not simply activate principles that remain.

sharper focus. Up till now we have been setting out the back-drop for the events that take place in the fallen, sinful, rebellious world of humanity that now inhabits the cosmos that has become subject to 'vanity'.

Having seen that Goodwin is wrestling to avoid Roman Catholic nature\grace dualism, yet failing to do this as comprehensively as he would like because he is still tied to the nature\grace categories, we must now examine how Goodwin copes with the creation once it has all become fallen from the state of 'pure' nature.

To re-capitulate, nature for Goodwin was created pure and perfect. In this state it could maintain everlasting natural life and be wholly acceptable to God. However, pure nature could never participate in the divine nature, because only the God-man Jesus Christ may 'naturally' participate in the life of God. Adam had tremendous joys and privileges in his condition of pure nature: he had the comfort and peace of a clear conscience; he was able to learn of his God from the creatures surrounding him; he was able to enjoy all these creatures fully for his own benefits because God had created them for him and him for them. Goodwin aims at pure nature as completely non-'supernatural', but is not able to do so, given that God Himself came to tell Adam of the tree that he must not eat from.

It is in his description of the Fall that Goodwin most parts company with the Roman Catholic position. Carrying on the tradition of Calvin, Goodwin shows that the Fall is more serious than a mere 'injury', a losing of grace, leaving nature untouched in its essential order and directedness. No, the sin of Adam brought about a radical corruption of nature, a profound darkening of the human heart and mind.



Goodwin refuses to allow nature an independent existence, a sphere of existence untouched by spiritual life and meaning, which is what appears to underlie the Roman Catholic position. This concern has been brought to much clearer and more focused expression in the theologians of the Dutch Calvinist school of thought. According to one of them, Herman Dooyeweerd, there can be no autonomy of existence or meaning in creation.

The Christian religion does not tolerate any hypostatization which ascribes independent being to dependent meaning. It does not permit these absolutizations, even if they disguise themselves in the garb of a speculative *theologia naturalis*.<sup>157</sup>

In Calvin's Biblical view-point this scholastic motive is eliminated. He maintained that the true nature of man cannot be opposed to grace. Nature is in its roots corrupted by the fall, and is only 'restored' or 'renewed' by God's grace in Jesus Christ. This was also Augustine's conception. The Bible does not permit any view of nature, in distinction to grace, in which human reason in its apostasy from God, becomes the main stay of a *philosophia et theologia naturalis*.<sup>158</sup>

Goodwin does not arrive at the harmony of grace and nature that Dooyeweerd calls for, but this is for many reasons. Part of Goodwin's essential drive is to show how much greater is redeemed nature than even the first, 'pure' nature. He wants to do something more than simply show the strict compatibility of nature and grace. Of course, Goodwin is far from happy with the concept of an autonomous realm of nature. Even pure nature was dependent upon God for its meaning and purpose, but fallen nature is impotent, ruined and would be sheer chaos and emptiness without God the Creator's continued commitment to His creation, by His Holy Spirit. God loves

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<sup>157</sup> Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, Vol. 1, pp.508-509  
<sup>158</sup> Ibid. p.516

His creation and by His grace extends His support and care even more in this fallen creation than its original purity.

That sin hath not only entered in upon the world of mankind, but hath universally overflowed it for sin, not a man excepted, is evident in that speech, 'all have sinned', upon which [Paul] says, 'death followed' Rom v.12-14.<sup>159</sup>

The seriousness of the fall of humanity cannot be over-stressed in Goodwin's thought. The very title of volume 10 is enough to put fear and trembling into the stoutest heart: 'An Unregenerate Man's Guiltiness before God, in respect of Sin and Punishment'. This volume carefully and methodically explains the consequences of the fall as it pertains to humanity. There is an anthropocentrism in Goodwin's view of the Creation, but, as we have seen this does not over-balance into a rejection of the importance of the creation itself. He simply focuses the fate of the creation as a whole upon the fate of human beings in particular: it is their sin that has brought about the 'vanity' that the creation is now subject to, and it is the glorious appearing of human beings as the sons of God that will usher in the full restitution and recreation of the old creation at the Eschaton. Of course, there cannot be the redemption of humanity without the redemption of the whole creation, given that humanity is not simply in the created universe, but is part of it. Nevertheless, it is humanity that is at the centre of God's redemptive history. Humanity is not simply a caretaker of the creation which is prior to it: no, humanity is the very pinnacle of the creation, in the image of God, made to enjoy the creation in fellowship with God.

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<sup>159</sup> Vol.10, p.4

Adam's sin brought about two terrible consequences upon human nature in Goodwin's theology:

Now therefore, Adam sinning, there were two things befell him: 1, an everlasting guilt of that act committed, binding him over to death; 2, a forfeiture of the Holy Ghost in him, and so of the image of God in holiness, and so by consequence the contrary depravation of his nature.<sup>160</sup>

Goodwin reiterates the classic Puritan\Reformed statement of the imputation of Adam's guilt i.e. that the act of sin carried with it a guilt, a responsibility, a debt, that neither Adam nor any of his descendants could ever atone for because they not only shared in this guilt, but also added to this guilt by their own individual sins. Our interest is in the second of Goodwin's consequences of sin in which he sets up a chain of three events: loss of the Holy Ghost; loss of the image of God; the depravation of Adam's nature.

Adam's sin causes the loss of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This in turn removes the image of God in humanity, which according to this argument is to be found in holiness. Finally, the loss of the image of God has the result of corrupting the very human nature of Adam.

Having seen that it was the holy principles within Adam that gave him the epistemological key to knowing and correctly relating to the cosmos of which he was a part we can now see that if these principles depended upon the indwelling Holy Spirit, who is unable to any longer 'indwell' sinful humanity, then a new or revised epistemology must be formulated to account for knowing in the sinful human person. It seems then that it was the Holy Spirit

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<sup>160</sup> Vol.10, p.11

by his indwelling who had provided the epistemological bridge between subject and object for Adam in the garden of Eden. Adam had the holy principles within by creation, but they were operative because of the holiness that kept him in fellowship with his Maker. The Holy Spirit indwelling him gave him the holiness that was his naturally intended lifestyle, that is to say, God had created him to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit who made him holy in the image of God.

Connecting the Holy Spirit with the image of God and the integrity of human nature in this way seems to be a most fruitful line of theological thought. This would seem to suggest that even the 'natural' righteousness of Adam could not exist simply as an autonomous, independent righteousness, but was entirely dependent upon the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Once any person or thing is alienated from the presence of God it cannot maintain its basic integrity, and, in the case of humanity, its righteousness. Inevitably it becomes depraved, corrupted, decayed and decaying. The very fact that the universe still exists with all its wonder and beauty; still displaying, declaring, the glory of God, shows that God is still committed to His creation. He has not allowed the alienation of sin to push the universe into non-being: He as both Creator and Redeemer will not allow sin to have the last word on the work of his hands. In spite of sin and human rebellion God maintains His relationship to what He has made. We look ahead to the time when the Holy Spirit will indwell His people, the community of Christ's Body, in an unrestricted way at the appearing of Jesus Christ, when God will dwell with His people and be their God. When the creation is so indwelt by God then there can be no room for the autonomous challenge of sin in the created order. Instead, all creation, but especially humanity, will marvellously voice the praise of God.

It is worth noting how Goodwin has followed Luther rather than Calvin, at least at this point in his works, on the question of the image of God. Calvin felt that the image of God had to do with the very structure and make-up of humanity in a way that actually made us human:

By this term is denoted the integrity with which Adam was endued when his intellect was clear, his affections subordinated to reason, all his sense duly regulated, and when he truly ascribed all his excellence to the admirable gifts of his Maker. And though the primary seat of the divine image was in the mind and the heart, or in the soul and its powers, there was no part even of the body in which some rays of glory did not shine.<sup>161</sup>

For Calvin, the whole image was ruined by sin, but only those spiritual aspects were entirely lost i.e. the image included both natural and spiritual gifts, but only the spiritual gifts of true knowledge, righteousness and holiness were destroyed by sin.

Luther, on the other hand, did not locate the image of God in any of the 'natural' qualities and characteristics of humanity, such as the powers of reason or free choice<sup>^</sup> or morality. Luther saw the image as exclusively residing in original righteousness and therefore it was completely removed by sin. He says this because, as Barth would do later, he begins with his soteriology and works back to his anthropology and his hamartiology. He begins with the restoration of the image described in Col. 3:10, and thus concludes that it must be entirely absent from any human outside of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>161</sup> Calvin, Institutes, I, 15:3

Goodwin wants to affirm that whether humanity is reconciled to God or remains alienated from Him in sin, yet the individual human is still the creature of God: humanity can never be anything other than His creature. Nevertheless, Goodwin loves to emphasize that fallen humanity is so qualitatively inferior, so much less than redeemed humanity.

By taking sin so seriously as to describe it as 'extinguishing'<sup>162</sup> the image of God, Goodwin declares war on the whole mediaeval view of creation and anthropology. Fallen humanity is in no way 'near to God' or even 'orientated toward God'. Sin has brought about a terrible, impossible, irretrievable alienation from God, that requires a re-creation rather than a repair to reverse it. This strict and total rejection of fallen humanity is a difficult and gruelling theological course which tests the metal of every Reformed theologian. Melancthon was unable to endure this strict antithesis between reconciled<sup>^</sup>created humanity on the one hand and sinful<sup>sf</sup>ruined humanity on the other:

Holy Scripture openly proclaims that there is an external uprightness which man can of his own power effect..... Because God does not will and has no pleasure in sin, and because sin first originated not of God's will, but of the free will of the devils and of Adam and Eve, and because man retains a freedom in external works, it follows that we should not keep saying that our wills were first forced into sin, or that we are still forced to commit external acts of evil.<sup>163</sup>

Goodwin, then, goes back to Luther's position, but he develops it further by making the cause of the image of God nothing less than the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. As Goodwin develops his thought it appears that

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<sup>162</sup> Vol.10, p.48

<sup>163</sup> Melancthon, Loci Communes (Philadelphia, 1969), p.42

the loss of the Spirit did not only mean the loss of image, but also of the ability to relate to the creation properly.

Adam committing that act of disobedience, his nature was thereby first in himself for ever defiled by it. We often see that one blow or fall strikes a man's members out of joint, so as of themselves they ever remain so, and so did that fall of his, though but one act of sin. If therefore we also be proved guilty of that act in him, then by the like reason also must that nature we receive from him by natural propagation be tainted with sin, as his was by virtue of that act. <sup>164</sup>

How can it be just that every human being receives this corrupted, sinful, darkened, unholy, alienated human nature when we have no part in the sin of Adam?

Goodwin addresses this question by taking up the idea of Adam as a public figure, a representative man.

I Cor xv and this Rom v... 1. Adam is in both held forth as Christ's type, as I have in another discourse proved...

And 2. Adam and Christ are held forth as public persons in both.... they are set together as type and antitype..... I ask, seeing Eve sinned, and sinned first, was 'first in the transgression', why was it not her sin? yea, and she was the root of propagation as well as Adam, why by that one man Adam and not Eve? No reason can be given but because Adam was the public person that represented us, and not she.....

The scope of Paul in this chapter (Rom 5) is to set Christ out by illustration of Adam his type, in respect of his conveying the righteousness of justification. <sup>165</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Vol.10, p.12

<sup>165</sup> Vol.10, p.15-16

Making Adam the shadow or type of Christ is of tremendous theological importance. If God had his mind upon the redeemed creation even before the original creation, making Adam as a foundation public figure in order to make way for the Proper Man (to use Luther's phrase), then God's commitment to His creation is placed at the very highest level. Knowing what would happen to the creation, God laid down, or set up, his redemptive plan in the very structure of the human race. If Adam was a public figure, a type of Christ, in the image of God because he was indwelt by the Holy Spirit, then the Spiritual Man, the realization of the type, is the express image of God who had the Holy Spirit without measure. Under this understanding, the creation is redeemed in so far as it is indwelt by the Spirit through the mediation of Christ. Yet, it is the Spirit who is in immediate contact with sinful humanity, bringing sinful humans to be renewed in Jesus Christ i.e. He directly contacts sinful humanity yet the Son indirectly contacts sinful humanity - (see Vol. VI pp.41-43).

So, because Adam legally represented all of humanity in his actions, we are all guilty of his sin, not simply recipients of his corrupt nature. This is why we receive an alienated humanity; because we are convicted guilty of the sin of Adam. Thus, we receive all the terrible consequences of that sin.

We are arrested not only as guilty of that first cursed act which [Adam] personally performed, and so in regard of it are termed sinners, and exposed liable to God's wrath but also as guilty of an universal, total, sinful defilement, spread over all faculties of soul and body, containing in it a privation or want of all good, and an inclination to all evil.....which is traduced into us by birth and fleshly generation.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Vol.10, p.40



God has ordered His creation such that like produces like. So, corrupt, alienated, unholy Adam was able to produce only children who were similarly bereft of the Holy Spirit.

Goodwin spends such a long time tracing out the precise depths and extent of the problem of sin, because he wishes to remove all confidence in 'the flesh', in 'fallen humanity'. He does this because he is aiming at the work of the Holy Spirit, especially in salvation but also in the general providence of His creation. Soteriology is the deciding factor in all of Goodwin's thought: his anthropology; his Pneumatology; his Christology are all worked out around the central questions and concerns of soteriology. He is not obsessed with sin and sinful corruption, rather he is captivated by the miracle of salvation in Christ by the Holy Spirit. He is jealous, on God's behalf, for the full credit of the salvation of God to go to God alone.

So, having clearly established the existence and universality of corrupt human nature, Goodwin now turns his attention to precisely what he means by corrupt nature, and it is here that our concern for epistemology once again comes explicitly in view. The chief enemy that Goodwin argues against is the mediaeval scholastic view of nature after the fall: for Goodwin nature has become far more than injured or weakened; it has become ruined.

First, a total and utter emptiness and privation of all that righteousness and true holiness which God first created in man, and which the law of God requires. Second, a positive sinful inclination to all that is contrary to grace, namely a proneness to sin....; which positive sinfulness is divided into two parts: 1, the inordinate lustings of the faculties after things earthly, fleshly, sinful; 2, an enmity unto God, and unto what is holy.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Vol.10, p.85

It is vital to appreciate that for Goodwin it is corrupt human nature that is inclined against the grace of God, meaning that the creation itself as it was created, as it is to be, as it really is in itself aside from the bondage to corruption and vanity that it has been subjected to, is Godly, in harmony with grace, made to be directed towards God through the Work of Christ who upholds it and is the rationale behind it. Nature is not simply the opposite of grace as classic Roman Catholic doctrine holds. Even though Hans Urs von Balthasar says that nature is simply non-grace as opposed to anti-grace, nevertheless there is a deadly dualism in such thought: God and His creation are either set over against each other or are at best unable to be properly related. For Goodwin, nature and grace are distinguished, and although in many ways he does fall into making them upper and lower levels, yet he cannot set them in opposition. If the image of God is human nature indwelt by the Holy Spirit, then there cannot be any ontological conflict between nature and grace.

However, if Goodwin so puts down fallen humanity as a foil for both created and redeemed humanity, it may well be objected that 'there are many excellent abilities and endowments of mind concerning things natural and political'. The world of humanity in which we live is unquestionably full of terrible cruelty, ignorance and evil, yet there is also such greatness and accomplishment, art and culture, music and literature.

Now many such good things we grant to be in men, though  
 devils by nature, as the substance and faculties of their souls;  
 and so these good endowments which are superinducted and  
 infused by the Spirit of God for the good of men, whilst these live

in societies together, without these several endowments the world would not stand, nor a city be inhabited.<sup>168</sup>

Having so exhausted fallen nature of its powers, Goodwin now begins to explain why life is not as bad as it could possibly be. This is not because humanity is not so bad after all, but because God is so deeply committed to His creation and His human creatures in spite of human sinfulness. God has given to human beings 'good endowments', gifts, graces, talents and skills to make life possible and enjoyable. Sin is an ontological impossibility (to use Barth's most useful expression), and unless God had come to the immediate assistance of His creation at the Fall then 'it could not stand' for a moment. At the least, human society would be impossible without God's ongoing gracious work by His Holy Spirit, striving with humanity, dispensing good gifts to all.

This is reminiscent of Abraham Kuyper's theology of common grace:

Indeed, so powerful is sin, if it were not for common grace holding back the spread of evil, mankind and the world as a whole would fall apart and disintegrate. Creation could not run its assigned courses nor fulfil its purposes.<sup>169</sup>

Now, although Goodwin does not draw out these threads in the way that Kuyper does, nevertheless we can find important insights into the necessity of God's involvement in the creation, specifically humanity and human society, given the problem of sin.

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<sup>168</sup> Vol.10, p.95

<sup>169</sup> Kuyper, quoted in Begbie, Voicing Creation's Praise, (Edinburgh, 1991) p.87

A spiritual, holy goodness is denied to be in man's nature, such as might make us acceptable to God..... So as though in themselves these endowments have this natural goodness '*in abstracto*', or abstractly considered, as they are in their own nature, yet take them '*in concreto*', as they are seated in a corrupt mind, they are unclean and abominable things in the sight of God. For why? All these gifts are poisoned and infected, yea, and make the source of sin greater and to work the more strongly... God therefore looks upon all these as things that make his enemies stronger against him; and therefore you that are scholars, and have good gifts, natural and acquisite, yet you wanting grace, these make you so much more abominable in God's eyes.<sup>170</sup>

All good gifts come from God, through the general work of the Holy Spirit, so these common grace gifts of civility, justice, understanding, wisdom, creativity etc. are all good gifts. However, because of humanity's corruption they become tools in the hands of sin. Thus, the brilliant imagination and creativity of humanity is so tragically often turned to sinful ends, producing brilliantly imaginative and creative acts of wickedness. Humanity, that is so able through the general endowments of the Holy Spirit, is capable of the most tremendously sinful wickedness. On top of all this, these abilities which the Spirit gives to all humanity, are not seen by sinful humanity as generous gifts from the Loving and Good Holy Spirit; rather fallen humanity believes in its own abilities, arrogating self-pride to itself even because of these very gracious gifts.

This is how Goodwin at one and the same time establishes human achievements upon the general work of the Holy Spirit, and thus, at the same time, tramples down all human pride.

What then of conscience? Surely here there is a place where even fallen human epistemological powers are able to achieve some success. Does not the very notion of sin carry within it an implicit notion of moral knowledge? Moral awareness, and even ethical rules, are evident in human culture at every time and place. Is, then, conscience part of 'essential' humanity? Does this moral sense in humanity escape the destruction of the Fall, or is it too a donation of the Spirit?

[T]ake the faculties of the soul with their bare birth-right dowry only, and there is not only no good thing that is holy, but not so much as these shadows of what is good derived to us as nature indwellers.... That phrase, Rom 2:14, proves the same thing, where this light is said to be written in men's hearts, for writing is *opus artificis, non naturae*, a work of art, not of nature. These characters are written, not born with us.<sup>171</sup>

The idea of natural law, that many thinkers have tried to derive from Romans 2, is totally unacceptable to Goodwin. We have seen that whereas Goodwin does believe in a natural order and a natural epistemology, nevertheless, because of his commitment to taking the noetic aspects of sin very seriously, he cannot allow the human heart or mind to be granted immunity from the corruption of sin.

G.C. Berkouwer shows how natural law took on a permanent form in Roman Catholic theology through the influence of Thomas Aquinas, and it has virtually retained this concept right to the modern day. Thomas saw natural law as part of the make-up of "the reasonable nature of man". Thus, man must strive for the good and for salvation, by virtue of being a reasonable soul.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Vol.10, p.101

<sup>172</sup> Berkouwer, General Revelation, (Michigan, 1955) p.192

As Goodwin addresses this idea of natural law we see how he again tries to escape the nature\grace dualism by emptying nature of all its potency so that all is ascribed to grace. Within that conceptual world, Goodwin sought to turn it over to God as the sole source of knowledge, goodness and meaning. By 'conscience', then, Goodwin does not mean a faculty of the fallen human person, albeit affected by the Fall, theirs by virtue of their being human.

Plato in the Republic (i.330; ix.579) describes the action of the conscience, and for him it is basic to human psychology. This notion, important in Greek philosophy, has had a great deal of influence in Christian theology, but it is hard to see that it has a place in a Biblical world-view. Paul does not say that the law itself is written on every human heart, since this was the Old Testament prophetic expectation only to be fulfilled in the New covenant (Isa 51:7; Jer 31:33 etc.), and the prophets could not look for what was already the case. The expectation was for God to write his law upon the hearts of his people. Paul, then, is not speaking about a universal experience of the law of God within, but of the "work of the law" that is upon the human heart. Goodwin takes this to be quite distinct from "the works of the law", which are tied up with the problem of justification and obedience to the Law. The work of the Law is the effect of God's moral character impressed upon the human heart issuing in the activity of 'conscience', which bears witness to the morality (or not) of human behaviour.

The Dutch concept of common grace is contained in the notion of 'infused light' in Goodwin's thought. Without common grace, argues Bavinck, the whole of human society would be reduced to the level of beasts. Goodwin

argues that conscience prevents human society from descending to the level of devils in spiritual state and animals in social life.

However, this infused light of conscience does not become an intrinsic part of human nature. This light

never becomes naturalized, as I may speak, in a man's nature, into a subject suitable to it; but as it is a stranger by birth, it hath a stranger's entertainment, and is not incorporated into the society of man's heart..... it crowds in there by force of arms, and so holds residence. See then the mercy and goodness of God and Christ now to the darkened condition of man; consider he lights a candle and holds it there in your hearts for you to see to work by, without which a man would be as a horse and mule, yea, as a wild ass (Job 11:12), so man is born; which, as it is the most stupid of creatures, empty of those shadows of reason other creatures have, so are we of those shadows of goodness, and therefore of ourselves we would be wild and ravenous, eating up one another.<sup>173</sup>

This 'infused light' seems to have more content to it than moral guidance. Goodwin sees it as undergirding, or making possible all distinctively human activity. This indicates the profound impact the concept of the Fall has made upon his anthropology. This terribly serious and pessimistic anthropology does not arise out of a sin-fixation or some guilt-ridden psyche, unbalanced by over-rigorous self-examination. Goodwin's anthropology derives from his passion for the holiness, goodness and sovereignty of God. He has looked long and hard at the Creator in all His Triune glory and now as he turns his gaze upon fallen, sinful humanity, he cannot contain his 'holy indignation', spurred on by a jealousy for the glory of God. Goodwin will not allow humanity to retain even a fragment of autonomy, whether it be in thought

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<sup>173</sup> Vol.10, p.104

or morality. There is no morality or reason apart from the gracious, sovereign will of God.

This does not mean that Goodwin is nominalistic. He speaks of what is "meet" or "suitable" to God, given his nature. Yet the autonomy and freedom of God are to be maintained in the face of the impotence, helplessness and bondage of fallen humanity. Nature does not have a rationality apart from God's grace: nature is stamped by grace, especially in this state of fallenness. Goodwin's opposition to the idea of innate, native natural law in human nature does not, of course, stem from the voluntarist objection to natural law. Voluntarism is irrational and unacceptable, not because it makes good and evil entirely dependent upon the will of God, but because it makes the will of God arbitrary. Goodwin chooses neither the natural law of an ontology of the good and the evil, nor does he choose the irrationalism of voluntarism. Rather, Goodwin ascribes goodness to the very character of God, His ontology, and the natural realm receives from Him its own rationality and morality.

Although the Reformation strove to be a rejection of the philosophical theology achieved over hundreds of years of mediaeval thought, yet it fell short of that. The Reformers universally accepted the concept of natural law. However, Berkouwer defends Calvin against a wholesale classification of him under the scholastic method. Berkouwer argues that although Calvin uses similar language, yet his meaning is founded on a very different base. Calvin does not explain civil righteousness and natural human goodness by relativizing the corruption of humanity through sin, as the Roman Catholic theologian would do, rather he appeals to the sovereign activity of God in human history, governing human affairs towards his own good ends.



We may say that Calvin's approach is entirely different from that of the Roman Catholic doctrine of natural law. The latter is founded in the reasonable nature of man, which, according to Rome, simply cannot but strive for the good. With Calvin we find nothing of the sort.<sup>174</sup>

Goodwin, in the tradition of Calvin, goes to great lengths to show that the basic nature of man is now directed against the good will of God.

We are not only turned from God, but turned enemies against him.<sup>175</sup>

It is so deep an enmity that is thus seated in the mind, as no time, no means that can be used, no persuasions, no threatenings, can of themselves reconcile them, or wear this enmity out, until God doth extend his mighty power and allay this enmity. And why? Because it is seated in the mind, in nature..... It is in the nature of the corrupt mind to be an enemy to God, as it is in the nature of a wolf to be an enemy to a lamb; and therefore nature so remaining, it will never yield unless it is changed.<sup>176</sup>

This is why Goodwin's reference to Romans 2: 14, 15 is of such a different character from the classic Roman Catholic use of the text. There is no innate natural law tending towards goodness in humanity, rather God has written upon or invaded the human heart with a moral sense which is entirely against the natural desires and inclinations of human nature. Thus, Goodwin's teaching about conscience not only does not weaken his doctrine of total depravity, rather it deepens it and sharpens it. We may make some general

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<sup>174</sup> Berkouwer, General Revelation, p.201

<sup>175</sup> Vol.10, p.106

<sup>176</sup> Vol.10, p.115

conclusions to gather together Goodwin's extensive thought on the concept of conscience.

First, given that the Holy Spirit, in Goodwin's arrangement, takes of the things of Christ and distributes them to humanity, we can see that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring this light of Christ, the light that lights every human in the world, to each human heart. This point is made at various points in Goodwin's corpus. God does not work in Word alone, but always also in Spirit.

Second, the word 'nature' when it is applied to humanity takes on an entirely negative aspect, not because of humanity in itself, but because humanity has become so totally corrupted, directed in an opposite direction to God, ignorant, darkened and powerless. However, when Goodwin uses the word 'nature' to refer to the rest of the creation, it takes on a positive aspect, qualified by the bondage of vanity and decay, but nevertheless still the good creation of God, maintained by and pushed forward by the Spirit through the mediating role of Christ as cosmic-creator/redeemer. The Holy Spirit groans for the redemption of the cosmos, and that is why, says Goodwin, the Spirit, with the bride, says "Come" at the end of the book of Revelation: the Spirit is the member of the Trinity most grieved and troubled by the fallenness and vanity of the Creation, because He is the One who strives with humanity, and gives life to all living things.

Third, grace does not assist nature. Grace stands in for nature, for the lack of all ability in fallen, corrupted human nature. Without the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and minds of fallen humanity there would be not even the shadow of human society, civility or culture. Human goodness is not

an example of enabled nature (*habitus*), but an example of the Holy Spirit working directly upon the human person. sf

## 7. Reason in Fallen Humanity

In his popular treatise A Child of Light Walking in Darkness, Goodwin spends time exposing the power of "carnal reason" in the human heart, and how it not only distorts and darkens theological subjects, but puts the human mind out of sorts with the whole of life and experience.

Since the fall, our hearts of themselves are nothing but darkness, and therefore no wonder if when God draws the curtains and shuts up the light from us, that our hearts should engender and conceive such horrid fears and doubts..... [1] In general; reason is of itself a busy principle, that will be prying into, and making false glosses upon all God's matters as well as our own....<sup>177</sup>

The problem with the reasoning of the sinful heart is that it is operating according to assumptions and moving in a direction that is against the rationale of the creation itself, and in fact against the truth about humanity itself. If the Creation is genuinely and meaningfully the Creation of God, revealing Him, sustained by Him, existing for Him, then the problems of human knowing, if human knowing is controlled and guided by the rational deliberations of the human heart, cannot affect only 'spiritual' matters. If all of created reality receives not only its existence, but also its meaning and rationale from the Holy Trinity, then fallen, sinful humanity is inevitably, and radically out of line with the creation itself, even with true humanity itself. The significance of this cannot be over-estimated, for it indicates a radical critique not only of the Enlightenment, but also of the chaos of postmodernism. The

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<sup>177</sup> Vol.3, p.250f.

Enlightenment's belief in a rationality that operated quite apart from assumptions, controlling beliefs and interpretation has now been widely falsified. However, this has caused a kind of anarchy of subjectivism and irrationalism, which we can loosely label post-modernism.<sup>178</sup> This also fails, and I think more radically even than rationalism, because it has to abandon any meaningful concept of truth at all. (It could be argued that, particularly with respect to the more radical post-modernist writing, as an attempt at a true description of human society and knowing, it is logically contradictory). If there is no underlying rationale, no shared mental categories other than those of convenience, then not only humanity's relationship to the created order is doomed, but ultimately inter-personal encounters would inevitably be non-personal and incomprehensible, if not completely indescribable.

Goodwin builds a careful, thorough creation theology, from which he is able to understand and critique the plight and untenability of the epistemological self-understanding of fallen humanity. If there has been a Fall, then one cannot go on to describe human, general epistemology as if we were all still in the Garden of Eden, in a state of harmony with the Logos of the Creation. We cannot build upon the assumption of 'objective', impartial reasoning from minds and hearts that are not only passively distanced from God, but actively seek to remain distanced from God. On the other hand God has not abandoned humanity to the chaos of utter anarchy and darkness, though that is our heritage by birth. He has continued to shine upon us the Light of the World, Jesus Christ, by His Spirit, providing a basis for human

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<sup>178</sup> Modernism tended to dissolve the subject into the object, whereas post-modernism tends to dissolve the object into the subject. Thus, in modernism, at least there was acknowledgement of truth as standing outside human knowing processes, but post-modernism denies the concept of truth in the sense of 'universal truth'. Post-modernism is appealing because of the space it gives, the room for a genuinely subjective grasping of the object, but the cost is too high.

society, civility, culture and conversation. The human mind is not autonomous, either in its rationalism or irrationalism, but lives and thinks in the categories maintained by the Holy Spirit, in whom we live, move and have our being. This is not a kind of foundationalism, because the foundation of rationality for the Christian mind is Jesus Christ, not simply in some anti-intellectual pietistic sense, but in the full, rich sense of Jesus as the Logos, Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer and Lord over all. The non-Christian's life and thought is inevitably 'il-Logical' in the ultimate sense.

It is not only the inferior powers of the soul which this plague of sin hath seized, but the contagion hath ascended into the higher region of the soul.... the most supreme, the most spiritual faculty of man's mind, the understanding power of man, is corrupted and needs renewing.<sup>179</sup>

Goodwin is well aware that this is a most controversial point of view to take. He admits that it needs to be proved, because the unregenerate understanding is unable and unwilling to accept this paradox about itself.

So it was to the heathen philosophers, and to many of the schoolmen also, though called Christians; who, though indeed they did acknowledge dregs to lie at the bottom of the affections in the lower part of the soul, which sometimes, when stirred and joggled by outward temptations, do mud and corrupt the mind; yet that sublime and noble faculty, according to their opinion of it, was in itself most pure, and the clearest of all the rest.<sup>180</sup>

Corrupt nature.. cannot discern the infection and defilement that is in the spirit itself, but the glass of the word discovereth it; and when that glass is brought there had need be an inward light of grace, which is opposite to this corruption, to discover it.... Nor

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<sup>179</sup> Vol.10, p.132

<sup>180</sup> Vol.10, p.132

is it privately corrupted only with ignorance, but positively also with corrupt diseases, habitual evil dispositions - I Tim 6:4,5.... He doth not only say that their minds are destitute of truth, so as they assent not to wholesome doctrine, but he says their minds are corrupt, sick and diseased, sick about vain questions, longing for them as a diseased stomach doth for trash.<sup>181</sup>

It is quite fascinating that after such a strong and comprehensive rejection of the achievements and potentialities of the sinful human mind Goodwin then goes on to assert that the heathen are repaired by the general work of the Spirit in matters civil and natural as is the regenerate mind.

Now, therefore the understanding of man since the fall hath received two wounds. It is not only stripped of that sanctifying light utterly and wholly, but those rich hangings and adorning attendants are gone too; and therefore they are repaired since the fall by 2 several remedies. viz. gifts and the grace of spiritual knowledge - (gifts of knowledge and wisdom you shall find where grace is not). Thus, the heathens had the imperfections of the mind repaired in natural and civil knowledge as much as we. And unregenerate men also have spiritual gifts Eph 4:8; Psalm 68:18.<sup>182</sup>

Goodwin proposes that we must have understanding and reason to be human, yet we would have no ability to use our reason or gain understanding if God left us in our true fallen condition. In this Goodwin seems to make the point which Brunner makes in Reason and Revelation, that there is a structural quality to humanity which is not destroyed by the fall, but the material quality is utterly destroyed. A fallen down house is a fallen down house, not a fallen down tree. This point is not without merit. Human nature cannot be repaired up to acceptability to God without a complete re-creation,

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<sup>181</sup> Vol.10, p.133

<sup>182</sup> Vol.10, p.140

yet the Holy Spirit is able to lay upon the ruins of humanity an 'alien' light and ability designed to enable human life to go on.

The idiot or born fool is not more guilty of Adam's sin than another. Goodwin says that the physically and mentally disabled stand as reminders or testimonies to the real inheritance of sinful humanity. But for God's concern to maintain the civil business and employments of the world, such would be the state of us all, and worse. Only the various gifts of the Spirit to ruined humanity can account for the relative mental health of some over others.

Thus, the knowledge of the nature of things, and of the application and use of them in profitable inventions for human life, is the gift of God.... And if thus in natural and civil things men's minds were so defective as to need God to help their wit and invention, much more great must be the deficiency of man's understanding in things moral and divine, and the aids from God more apparent.<sup>183</sup>

Hast thou parts, and learning, and knowledge in natural or civil affairs, or hast thou spiritual gifts? know whom to thank for them. They grew not out of corrupt nature, which is too vile and base a soil to produce any thing that is good, but it is God who, out of his bounty and riches of goodness, hath endowed thee with them.... View but your own pictures in fools, and tell me what hath put the difference between you and them....

It is a great obligation that lies on those who have parts to employ them for God, who preserves them when sin might have taken them utterly away.... And this should also teach men to depend on God for their knowledge and learning and the increase of them, for alas, they cannot secure to themselves all their wit and learning. The parts of their mind are as subject to

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<sup>183</sup> Vol.10, p.145

decay as are the beauties of the face, and may be wasted and lost as well as them or their estates.<sup>184</sup>

Goodwin makes it clear that just as God has given to all creatures instincts to know and discern what is the way to live in this world, so as to make their life possible, so "to men also God hath given to know the things of man, in order to the upholding their natural and civil being in this world".<sup>185</sup> Whether it be ploughing a field (an example which Goodwin explicitly gives), governing a nation, writing a story, building a house: all of these tasks of humanity in and for this world are enabled by the work of the Holy Spirit within them, granting gifts of knowledge and wisdom quite apart from the regenerating work of grace.

In our survey of Goodwin's theology of Creation, Fall, anthropology and epistemology we have marked out the contours of his thought. The creation belongs to God, and although it has suffered a curse of 'vanity' along with humanity it is still good, still proclaiming the greatness and goodness of God. Humanity, although created good, lost the indwelling Holy Spirit by the sin of Adam, which caused the loss of holiness and the image of God. This brought about an epistemological crisis for humanity, because, deprived of the inner light of holiness of the Holy Spirit, the human mind was powerless to know and interpret the created order. The problem was so severe because the Fall caused not a mere privation of holiness, but a total corruption of human nature itself, not so that it ceased to be authentically human, but such that it was now a corrupt, evil humanity directed away from God, yet still living on in His Creation, sustained by Him. God brings to this ruined human nature, by the Holy Spirit, instincts and light that enable life to continue in a provisional way,

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<sup>184</sup> Vol.10, p.176

<sup>185</sup> Vol.10, p.142



adequate to the purposes of redemption, so that humanity is not entirely lost. All human achievements in natural or civil affairs are thus based on the gifts of knowledge and wisdom given out to humanity by the general work of the Spirit, and therefore cannot be a source of boasting or human pride. In fact, when the good gifts of God are used to further the sinful rebellion of humanity, taking strength from God's kindness to wage war more violently against Him, then the guiltiness and condemnation upon humanity becomes more acute.

There is then a general epistemological framework for all human knowing in Goodwin's theology, and this is provided by the web of ideas contained in his conception of the God-world relationship:

- a) human createdness;
- b) the creation as creation for humanity, being a general revelation not only of the Being of God explained in His works, but also a realm of knowledge and experience designed as the environment for human life lived in fellowship with the Holy Trinity, indwelt by the Holy Spirit and sustained by the Eternal Logos;
- c) the divine government of the creation according to the same rationale that lies within human createdness; and
- d) the infused light of conscience, knowledge and wisdom given by the Holy Spirit to humanity in its state of complete ignorance and darkness.

We return, finally, to the question with which we began this section: can we secure a general revelation, needed to give a coherent explanation of general epistemology, without falling into the abyss of natural theology? It seems clear, by now, that this can be done. Goodwin has a strong notion of general revelation, but there can be no possibility of a natural theology being produced by the darkened, God-hating mind of the fallen human. For Goodwin, unless there is a renewal of human nature by regeneration, there

can be no genuine knowledge of God. Goodwin would not share Brunner's anthropology in detail, but in Reason and Revelation Brunner makes the point in question clear:

While the Bible teaches a general revelation, or a revelation in the Creation, it does not teach 'natural theology'. It does not teach that the revelation in the Creation, which is given to all, implies an actual, experimental knowledge of God, and thus that man, in spite of and in his sin, may know God. Rather it is an integral part of the sin of man that the knowledge of God which begins to dawn upon him through revelation is suppressed by him, so that the revelation which God gives him for the knowledge of Himself becomes the source of the vanity of idolatry. The sinful human being is a vessel in which the lees of sin transform the wine of the knowledge of God into the vinegar of idolatry.<sup>186</sup>

## 8. Scripture and Faith

The Bible is the revelation of God. Goodwin's whole theology proceeds on this assumption, which he rarely treats in a direct and thorough way. Given that he sees the Spirit as the One who brings the objective truth and reality of Christ to subjective realization within history, then the concept of the Bible as a given revelation of God is not difficult for him. Again, the issues of general revelation and natural theology are replayed in this arena of the doctrine of Scripture: that the Bible is the revelation of God, an inerrant, verbally inspired record of what God has to say to humanity, is one thing, but it is quite another to say that this material is accessible to the understanding processes of any reader regardless of their spiritual standing and noetic structures.

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<sup>186</sup> Brunner, Revelation and Reason, (London, 1947) p.65

Because the Bible is the battleground for understanding and knowing God, Satan (in Goodwin's theology) is particularly keen to attack and undermine the legitimate use of the Bible. Goodwin proposes that Satan is at work to deceive the children of light as they walk through the darkness of this world. This being the case, one of his major temptations is to try to cause Christians to misunderstand the sayings of Scripture.<sup>187</sup> Below that major temptation, there are minor temptations which try to get the Christian to misapply various Scriptures.

So, although a man be full of knowledge, and through the light thereof hath a right judgement both of the Scriptures and of the ways of the work of grace by which men's estates are to be judged, and so therein Satan cannot be too hard for him with all his sophistry; yet, by misrepresenting a man to himself, and by perverting his own ways to him, making that which is straight seem crooked, and all in him to be hypocrisy, a man is brought to pass a false sentence upon himself.<sup>188</sup>

Thus, Scripture can be both misunderstood and misapplied, due to "that darkness of ignorance that is in us". But working against Satan is the Holy Spirit who applies Scripture to expose all the corruptions of the human heart:

The difference is that the Holy Ghost dealeth sweetly herein, but as a father that rebukes and convinceth his child of his misdemeanours.<sup>189</sup>

A hermeneutic of both Scripture and humanity is needed. One to grasp God's revelation, and the other to apply that revelation correctly. However,

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<sup>187</sup> See Vol.3, p.268

<sup>188</sup> Vol.3, p.268 & 269

<sup>189</sup> Vol.3, p.269

this hermeneutic is not simply a matter of [scientific] rules and principles, but of a spiritual work that is guided by the Holy Spirit. Given that we are human beings, with human hearts that are so "deceitful and desperately wicked",<sup>190</sup> we are unable to view or grasp the human situation for ourselves. We have no objective viewpoint. We cannot have a God's-eye view of ourselves unless He gives us that view through the inner guidance and illumination of the Holy Spirit, who takes the Word and reveals God's judgement of humanity. Thus, Goodwin realizes the hermeneutical circle, the connection between the reader and the text, self-understanding and the application of what is read. But, he grounds this relationship in the spiritual warfare between evil and good, between Satan and the Holy Spirit. This is not Gnosticism, in that these forces are not simply equal and opposite. God is in absolute control of all things, even the workings of evil and sin. Goodwin makes the standard Puritan move of emphasizing that God, in His sovereignty, turns even the evil rebellion of Satan to His own glory.

The Holy Spirit uses the Bible with the goal of healing the sickness of the human heart, whereas Satan uses it only ever to bring despair, fear and hopeless guilt. The Word of God is a sword in the skilful hand of the Spirit. He uses this sword to kill the power of the sin in the human heart: Satan tries to wield it to kill the human heart through despair.

The problems caused by bad exegesis are "infinite to reckon up". Souls have been cast down into deep distress "from a place of Scripture misunderstood and misapplied". Goodwin cites and examines the case of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit as one of the prime cases in question.

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<sup>190</sup> Jer. 17 v 9

The true and proper use of the Scriptures is to set Christ before the mind of the seeking sinner.

[B]ecause the Scriptures were written for our comfort, and so fitted to and for the workings of faith, therefore they were so written, as especially to bring down and lay before us the heart of God and of Christ; and so the main thing they hold forth is, the full intent and purpose both of God and of Christ to pardon and receive sinners.<sup>191</sup>

However, this knowledge of God, as we have already noted, is not "public truth"<sup>192</sup> in the Enlightenment sense of that phrase, in that it is not the common property of all humanity without reference to their spiritual condition. In Vol.4 of his works, Goodwin has "A Discourse of the Glory of the Gospel", in which he argues "that the knowledge of the gospel is a most excellent wisdom, because, as a peculiar favour, it is communicated by God only to some persons".<sup>193</sup>

Goodwin shows that the knowledge of the Gospel is given only to the saints, as the Father concealed it from the wise, but revealed it to babes. Commenting on Matt 13:11 Goodwin says,

And therefore I may say of the Gospel, as the great philosopher Aristotle spake of his writings. When he had published the lectures which he had read to his scholars unto the world,

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<sup>191</sup> Vol.4, p.207

<sup>192</sup> The Word of God is not a universal knowledge. There is something hidden about it, because of the darkness of the fallen human mind. It is true, universally true, but it is not available for "public" inspection in the way that mathematics or physics is. Mental exertion will provide understanding of the claims of physics, but no amount of mental exertion can overcome the infinite, qualitative distance between the fallen, 'natural' human mind and the objects of faith that the Spirit reveals through the Word.

<sup>193</sup> Vol.4, p.292-303

Alexander found fault with him; for now, saith he, you have debased all your knowledge by making it common. No, saith Aristotle, for they are *edita, non edita*, though they are published, yet they are not published; for none will understand them now they are published, but only my scholars whom I have read them unto, and are privy to my scope in them. So it is true of the gospel, that though the mystery of it is made known unto every creature, yet it is *editum, non editum*, though it be published, yet it is so published as only those that are taught of God understand it in the mystery of it.<sup>194</sup>

In his consideration of preaching, elsewhere, Goodwin shows that the words of the gospel need to be received by one who has the Teacher-within if they are to be understood or grasped. The Holy Spirit alone can give understanding of the revelation of God. This is not to say that there is no revelation until the Spirit "actualizes" the Word of God, but that the revelation falls on blind eyes: the light of truth shines, but it is not "seen" by the unregenerate mind.<sup>195</sup>

The gospel is only for the elect of God, not for the world of 'carnal men' generally considered. This, of course, raises the serious objection that these 'carnal men' do in fact know what the Gospel has to say, as well as the saints. Goodwin replies that the Bible is not of private interpretation:

that it is not in the power of any man's understanding to apprehend or know the meaning of the word.... therefore, as the

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<sup>194</sup> Vol.4, p.294

<sup>195</sup> Of course, Goodwin is operating here with a very distinct understanding of revelation. Revelation is the uncovering of something, the showing of something. The fact that this may be to a blind man does not effect its character as revelation. Thus, one could 'reveal' what one has written on a piece of paper simply by holding it up. The fact that one may be holding it up before a blind person does not invalidate the action as 'revelation'. If a tree falls over when no-one is present, does it make a sound? Goodwin must say "yes", if he were consistent.

scripture was written by the Holy Ghost, so it must be the Holy Ghost that must interpret it.<sup>196</sup>

The knowledge of 'carnal men' concerning the Gospel is no real knowledge at all; it is mere hearsay, as Goodwin calls it. The unregenerate do not have any vital cognition of what they hear and read: it is existentially meaningless to them. It is a matter of mere words, the referents of which relate to things that the non-Christian knows nothing of.

Now all the knowledge that carnal men have of the gospel, is but by images received from the hearsay of it only; but the knowledge which holy men have, is by the impress and image received from the thing itself made known unto them by the Holy Ghost. I remember one once said of the late Queen Elizabeth, I have seen her picture, saith he, but I have one picture of her that I will not sell for all the pictures of her in the world. And what was that? I saw her but once, saith he, and the image of her remains still in me; which image he could convey to no man living.<sup>197</sup>

This is a vital moment in Goodwin's account of the Spirit's work in epistemology. We know things in the sense world because we encounter them and receive information about them through our senses. We know sensual things because of sensual experiences. A blind man cannot know what a red apple is because he has no experience of that kind of sensory input. A deaf man cannot meaningfully speak of sound, although he may employ words which describe noise and sounds. Thus, because the 'carnal man' has no spiritual experience at all, his speech of matters spiritual is empty of real meaning, as far as he is concerned. One needs spiritual experiences,

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<sup>196</sup> Vol.4, p.295

<sup>197</sup> Vol.4, p.297

even spiritual senses,<sup>198</sup> in order to know what is meant when spiritual realities are described. The Holy Spirit as the Creator and Governor of the spiritual creation introduces the regenerate soul to the various 'sights and sounds' of the spiritual world, and it is this that brings the words of Scripture alive into powerful, exciting meaning.

The image and impress, that which entereth into the heart of a spiritual man of the things of the gospel, is a different image to what is in the heart of a carnal man. And yet now, if the one should go and describe, and speak of the things of the gospel, he would express it no otherwise than the other, for there is something still that cannot be expressed. As, for example, take the sun, there is something in the sun that can never be pictured. And what is that? The life, and glory, and heat of it, and yet therein lies the excellency of the sun. So there are those things in Christ, and in the gospel, which can never be pictured out by words, that unless Jesus Christ hath by his Spirit manifested himself to a man's heart, he is never able to take it in.<sup>199</sup>

In one sense Goodwin pre-empts some features of Kantian epistemology. Goodwin would thoroughly agree with some of Kant's principles: "...all the ambitious attempts of reason to penetrate beyond the limits of experience end in disappointment"<sup>200</sup>. We can only know what we can experience, and the noetic structures of the mind itself are shaped by our experience. Schleiermacher responded to Kant's epistemological programme by agreeing with it, but locating the experience of God within the causality of the world, thus making it a universal experience or potentiality of humanity and nature. This is why Schleiermacher fails, in that he cannot make a sufficiently

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<sup>198</sup> The concept of receiving spiritual 'senses' by the Holy Spirit can be found in a variety of Puritan writings, although the idea dates back to the Middle Ages.

<sup>199</sup> Vol.4, p.297

<sup>200</sup> Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, (London 1934) p.469



clear demarcation between the normal, natural, universal human consciousness and the specifically God-consciousness. Schleiermacher inevitably finds his nemesis in Feuerbach. Goodwin also accepts the necessity of experience for knowledge, but uses this principle as the way to demarcate the Christian from the non-Christian. The Holy Spirit introduces the individual, after regeneration, to the various experiences and 'objects' of the 'noumenal' realm. Thus, the 'noumenal' realm becomes part of the empirical realm for the regenerate human. The guide to these experiences, what clarifies their character within the human consciousness, is the Word of God, taken here to mean specifically the Bible. Once the Christian has been exposed to the spiritual world of experience then there is a realization of what the Bible is actually talking about. The Bible confirms and explains the experiences that the Spirit enables. In fact, the Spirit specifically directs the regenerate mind to the words of the Bible, with powerful urgency, because Spirit without Word is mere mysticism, a denial of the Trinity.

However, the Holy Spirit leaves an impression upon a human heart of spiritual matters, especially Jesus Christ, that cannot be conveyed to another in mere words. The Bible is the guide and description of the spiritual world, written by the Holy Spirit who "moved" the writers. These divinely inscribed words become full of meaning only as the Spirit introduces the elect reader to the objects and Persons that the words describe. The tendency of the 'carnal man' is to understand the words of the Bible, the gospel, from his understanding of the material world, that is, to understand the world he knows nothing of in terms of the world he knows something of. Given that his knowledge of the material world is itself under-written by the Holy Spirit, this very act of speculation is possible only by grace!

Given this framework, Goodwin can take the words of the Bible very seriously as the direct revelation of spiritual truth. The words of Scripture are even able to make a person perfectly skilled in comprehending and dealing with the spiritual world.<sup>201</sup>

The Scripture is said to make the man of God perfect, which cannot be said of any science in the world. There is not philosophy enough in all men's books to make a man a perfect philosopher, but there is Scripture enough to make a man a perfect divine.<sup>202</sup>

Goodwin can only make such a statement because of his deep commitment to the spiritual nature of the meaning of Scripture: its referents are objects/subjects/persons unavailable to the unregenerate mind. We will see in Chapter 3 how Goodwin grounds this in his doctrine of regeneration as the central, defining doctrine of soteriology.

It is significant that Goodwin never uses II Tim 3 v 16 in his whole works, as far as I can determine. The accusation has often been made that the doctrine of verbal, plenary, inerrant inspiration of the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit arises from an over-reliance on II Tim. 3 v 16, but that does not appear to be the case with Goodwin. He maintains all the features of that doctrine, but is motivated by much wider considerations than the exegesis of but one verse.

Much more important in Goodwin's mind are the ideas contained in the first two chapters of II Peter, with special reference to 1:20+21. He frequently cites these verses to show that the Scriptures cannot be correctly interpreted

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<sup>201</sup> See Vol.4, p.301

<sup>202</sup> Vol.5, p.537

or understood from any human perspective, that to study the Bible merely at the level of human words and historical setting is to fail to catch the direction of meaning. The Spirit, as the ultimate and true author, is the only One who can give the correct understanding of the text, precisely because its meaning is spiritual. When Goodwin says this he is not following Origen with his allegorical levels of meaning in each text, rather, he means that the Bible is describing the relationship between the spiritual, unseen world and the earthly, seen world. If a reader is only aware of the earthly and seen, then the real meaning and direction of the Bible is lost to them. On the basis of this, Goodwin sets the wisdom of this world as foolishness, in opposition to the wisdom of God.

But now if you bring the sharpest understandings to read and apprehend the things written and revealed in God's other book, his word, they cannot do it without a supernatural light and assistance.... Was it not matter of derision to the Athenians? Acts xvii. 32... Because though they heard these things, yet their quick wits, not enlightened by the Spirit, could not apprehend them. And therefore the Scripture is said not to be of private interpretation: 2 Peter 120..... i.e. no private understanding, nor the sharpest wit, if not assisted by the Holy Ghost, can understand them, for their meaning cannot be explained without the help of the public secretary of heaven, who wrote them at first.<sup>203</sup>

By this Goodwin does not mean that the words of the Bible were first recorded in heaven by the Holy Spirit, then later transferred to the earthly historical situation by dictation. This Islamic doctrine of revelation has no place at all in Goodwin's epistemology.

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<sup>203</sup> Vol.10, p.145

Of course, the scheme outlined sounds rather difficult, in that so much of the Bible is the simple narration of history, which surely is not inaccessible to the unregenerate reader? Goodwin deals with this problem directly:

And if it be said, May not men understand the historical matters of fact laid down in the word, as well as they understand other histories, by the strength of their natural wit and reason? I answer, yes, they may, but yet not so as to apprehend the design of the sacred story, or the holy use for which it was wrote, to instruct men in it, which is the chief mind and intent of the Holy Ghost. This they cannot understand without supernatural assistance; or if they could compass in their thoughts, the meaning of the history of the Bible... yet they can never penetrate the mysteries of the gospel.<sup>204</sup>

The fallen human understanding needs the direct work of the Holy Spirit if it is to grasp the realities that Scripture speaks of, if it is to catch the tone and directedness of the words. It is the Holy Spirit who leads human beings into truth and reveals the "secrets of God" (1 Cor. 2 v 10). The Spirit is

the keeper of all those archives of eternity, and they are all committed to his custody, and he lets us into the view of them, and reveals what is revealed of them unto us 'as he will'.<sup>205</sup>

Barth wanted to ensure that the "proclamation of the Word of God is achieved not through the individual components of this relation [the philological and historical worldliness of the Scripture] or the sum of them, and therefore, e.g., neither through philological acuteness nor through the most talented and refined feel of the author, but purely and simply through the

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<sup>204</sup> Vol.10, p.145

<sup>205</sup> Vol.6, p.28

power of the Biblical Word itself, which now makes a place for itself in a quite different period and becomes the content of this period, because in proclamation the stage is held not by Paul the religious personality, but Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ, and in him by Jesus Christ Himself'.<sup>206</sup> This emphasis of Barth, to guard the contemporaneousness of the Word, can be heard in Goodwin also as he struggles to articulate the two-foldness of the Word of God, as both a worldly historical document, but also the sovereign free self-revelation of God in His Word and Spirit.

God hath writ the Scriptures to men endowed with reason, yea, and applied it to the way of human arts and sciences. Yet still so as the light of faith is a light beyond that of reason, which appears, First, that the first principles of the gospel,.... are wholly above reason, and made evident by this supernatural light wholly. They are wholly new, and reason is incapable of them..... [F]aith doth fetch its principles about Christ, &c., from heaven, from the bosom of God, the Spirit laying in the deep things of God's counsel, as principles wholly new and wholly above nature. And these it sees no other way than by a supernatural light and revelation of the Spirit... Therein faith and reason differ, that *nihil est in intellectu, quod non prius in sensu*, but here many things are in faith which were never in reason.

And, secondly,... that though faith useth reason to discuss the truth of deductions from these principles, and to gather conclusions from these principles laid... Yet still, even in these arguings and deductions, there accompanies a light that faith strikes in with, a light beyond the force in the reason. It seals up the truth collected by reason, beyond the power of reason..... [T]he Holy Ghost is to faith still his own interpreter..... Strength of natural principles and of reason may help forward that knowledge, which is, of its own sphere, notional and rational; and in a believer, it may help to advance knowledge of spiritual things in a rational way; but it contributes nothing to the light of revelation by the Spirit, who works how much and when he pleaseth.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Barth, CD. I.1, p.169

<sup>207</sup> Vol.7, p.64-65

It seems that Goodwin has secured the concerns that Barth's actualism seeks to defend, that is, keeping the historical revelation of God free from 'possession' by the human mind. Any human understanding of the text of the revelation of God is wholly the decision of God. He alone, by the Holy Spirit, can grant the possibility of spiritual knowledge to an individual. It is not that the Bible becomes the Word of God in Goodwin's thought. It is already that by virtue of the way it was written under the relative superintendence of the Spirit. However, because its meaning refers to another world, it is incomprehensible, in its true sense, to the unregenerate mind. Kant is right when he says that because the human mind is shaped only by the content of this world it is in no position to speak of the spiritual realm. However, this is only true in its description of humanity in its unregenerate condition. The regenerate, sanctified mind, under the working of the Spirit, is shaped by experiences of another world, and thus acquires the noetic structures necessary for true knowledge of the spiritual world.

#### 9. Assurance: Belief, Reflection or Experience.

Being a Christian on the one hand, and knowing that one is a Christian on the other are, subjectively, quite distinct matters as far as the Puritan mind is concerned. This is made very explicit in Puritan spirituality, but is far from confined to that age and approach.

Even if one knows something to be the case e.g. that God became a human being, lived a perfect life, died a perfect death and rose bodily on the third day according to the Scriptures, yet it is a quite a different order of knowledge to know one's own involvement in those events at that

time, at that place, concerning that man. One may know that those events happened, that they are of crucial importance for the past, present and future of the universe, that they constitute the decisive point in God's relation to humanity, that one's involvement in those events is the only way for one to escape the everlasting torment of the judgement to come<sup>208</sup> - yet, the question of one's own involvement in those events was considered to be quite a different matter.

There have generally been three types of proposal to answer the problem of assurance.

The first is the one adopted by Calvin - that assurance and faith are vitally connected. Faith cannot be in the context of doubt as to one's own involvement.

The certainty which faith requires must be full and decisive, as is usual in regard to matters ascertained & proved. Certainly, whenever God thus recommends his word he indirectly rebukes our unbelief, the purport of all that is said being to eradicate perverse doubt from our hearts. There are very many also that form such an idea of the divine mercy as yields them very little comfort. For they are harassed by miserable anxiety while they doubt whether God will be merciful to them. The idea they entertain is, that this mercy is great and abundant, is shed upon many, is offered and ready to be bestowed upon all; but it is uncertain whether it will reach to them individually, or rather whether they can reach to it. Thus their knowledge stopping short leads them only half way; not so much confirming and tranquillizing the mind as harassing it with doubt and disquietude. Very different is that feeling of full assurance (plerophoria) which the Scripture uniformly attributes to faith - an assurance which leaves no doubt that the goodness of God is clearly offered to us. This assurance we cannot have without truly perceiving its sweetness, and experiencing it in ourselves....

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<sup>208</sup> A theme not infrequently emphasized in Puritan preaching, making assurance a deeply treasured blessing.

[O]ur faith is not true unless it enables us to appear calmly in the presence of God.<sup>209</sup>

Calvin goes on to argue that all who are true believers anticipate salvation with undoubting confidence. Any doubting in the Christian must be at quite a superficial level because they have true faith.<sup>210</sup> Calvin seems to say that it is impossible to apprehend the redeeming death of Christ without mentally being given assurance of one's own involvement in it. The problem is made more difficult once Calvin talks of the damned possessing temporary faith. Given his definition of faith, how can it be temporary?

R.T. Kendall is right to point out that the question of assurance shifts, over the 50-75 years following the death of Calvin, from faith in Christ to the decrees of election.<sup>211</sup> If faith in Christ may be either lasting or temporary, and it is not possible to determine which one has, then one's attention is inevitably fixed upon the decrees of election and reprobation which underlie all one's experience of faith & the grace of God. One needs to know whether one is elect or not, and this will determine if one's faith is genuine or not, whether the Spirit's work is to salvation or simply a short term project.

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<sup>209</sup> Calvin Institutes, 3.II.15

<sup>210</sup> It must be said, however, that Calvin is far more nuanced than this summary of his thought suggests. In Book 4, ch.14, sec..7 & 8, Calvin explicitly deals with the weakness and imperfection of faith in the believer, and how it needs improving through the public ministry of word and sacraments:

[T]he sacraments are truly termed evidences of divine grace, and, as it were, seals of the goodwill he entertains toward us. They, by sealing it to us, sustain, nourish, confirm, and increase our faith. The objections usually urged against this view are frivolous and weak. They say that our faith, if it is good, cannot be made better; for there is no faith save that which leans unshakingly, firmly and undividedly, on the mercy of God. It had been better for the objectors to pray, with the apostles, "*Lord, increase our faith*" (Luke 17:5), than confidently to maintain a perfection of faith which none of the sons of men ever attained, none shall ever attain, in this life.

<sup>211</sup> See R T Kendal, Calvin and English Calvinism (Oxford, 1979)



The answer provided to this problem, initially by Beza, but in more detail by William Perkins (1558-1602), was to examine the fruit of the Spirit in one's own life. In dealing with "that most difficult case of conscience" Perkins lays out in great detail and complexity the progress of grace in the life of one of the elect. The paradigm for this whole method of gaining assurance was "by this we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments". Calvin could simply say, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved" and you will know that you are saved. Perkins could not say this - he would exhort people to believe on Jesus Christ, but he could not promise such an easy transition to the assurance of salvation that Calvin offered.

These theological tensions in Thomas Goodwin led him and many contemporary theologians back to a more immediate, experimental description of the Christian life.

To read the personal spiritual journals of "lay-folk" during the late 16th and 17th centuries is to tap into this whole debate about assurance in a very direct and powerful way. Thomas Shepherd's famous ministry, characterized as it was by a concern for intense self-examination, produced several "conversion narratives" from his congregation. This debate was far from dry and merely theoretical: it shaped the lives of thousands of Christians in both Britain and America.

How is it possible to know for sure that one is united to Christ in His death and resurrection? How can one know that God views one as righteous rather than wicked? How can true faith be distinguished from nominal, intellectual assent?

Goodwin answers this series of questions, as he preaches on Ephesians 1vv.13,14. He preached 3 sermons on the subject of the sealing of the Spirit and the earnest of the Spirit, but he prepared for this series by looking at vv. 11-14 as a whole in 2 introductory sermons.

It is significant to note the theological terrain he maps out in these introductory sermons because they give us a clear insight into the theological problems he was facing and why he was driven to this experimental form of assurance.

In sermon XIII, the first introductory sermon, he describes how it is that we have obtained an inheritance. He shows that an inheritance comes to a person, they do not seek for it- "it is cast upon them".

You have heaven cast upon you, you that are believers, as it were by lot. Poor souls, you came hither to church, and here you put yourselves upon God's lottery; and you do well. What is the reason why a poor servant goes away with Christ in her heart? She hath a draw for it, and she draweth eternal life; it is cast upon her. Ladies come here; here come men and women of great quality; perhaps they go away without it. It is cast upon men by lot. The greatest work that ever God did was to convert souls, and he carries it so as he did it the most casually. You know that the most casual thing in the world is a lot....Here you come and you are all cast into the great bay of the Church, and God by his secret providence, throws & casteth heaven upon thee, and letteth others go.<sup>212</sup>

Thus, the sense of absolute dependence upon the whim of God's secret providence is brought sharply, perhaps terrifyingly, into the minds of Goodwin's congregation. Salvation cannot be made certain by any activity

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<sup>212</sup> Vol.1, p.208

from the human side of the equation -thus, it appears random, secret and hidden.<sup>213</sup>

On the other hand, Goodwin establishes the other pole of the tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility in sermon XIV, the second introductory sermon, when he presses upon his hearers the necessity of their response in faith to the offer of the Gospel.

Faith is seated in 2 faculties, in the understanding and in the will. Answerably, what hath the Gospel? To satisfy the understanding, it hath the greatest truth in the world; it is the word of truth; the understanding closeth with that. To satisfy the will, it hath the greatest good in the world; it is the Gospel of salvation. So that now first a man being persuaded of the truth of the gospel, and that truth being a matter of salvation, his will hath reason to close with it, and so he makes up the bargain with God; that is believeth.<sup>214</sup>

Thus Goodwin, along with his fellow Puritan ministers, frequently oscillates between the strictest expression of divine sovereignty and a strong statement of the responsibility of human beings to respond to God's free offer of salvation in Jesus Christ.

The real difficulty for assurance arises when human responsibility is understood as a sub-set or function of divine sovereignty i.e. if one has saving faith in Jesus Christ it is entirely because there has been a prior decree that

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<sup>213</sup> It is fascinating to see Goodwin's conformity to Aquinas on the subject of assurance. By making election, which is seen as a hidden decision of God, the ground on which assurance is based, Goodwin inevitably has to appeal to special revelation for true assurance to be gained. Aquinas in Q.112 sec. 5 of the *Summa* says that God may reveal to specially privileged people their state of grace, but no one can be certain of this for themselves because the ground of grace is in God, whose sublimity is beyond all knowing.

<sup>214</sup> Vol.1, p.226

decreed that very result, and if one's faith is but temporary this too is equally decreed beforehand. Salvation and damnation are both secretly determined, hidden from the revelation that happens in Jesus Christ.

Goodwin shares with Calvin a belief that the Holy Spirit works temporary faith in the hearts of those who have been decreed to remain in their sin and rebellion. Goodwin spells out in detail the high spiritual experiences and accomplishments that a temporary believer can know. Hebrews 6:4-10 forms the basis for this description. Goodwin's goal is to comfort the weakest believer with the knowledge that as long as their faith is genuine, they may be 'babes' on spiritual milk, yet they shall obtain heaven, whereas, there are some who have many experiences and achievements, yet they have no part in the kingdom of God at all. However, this kind of teaching did not produce comfort, but doubt and fear, not because the phenomena described do not occur, but because his account of such happenings makes it nigh on impossible to determine whether one had real faith or temporary faith.

That, then, forms the background to Goodwin's consideration of assurance. Election is like a lottery, yet we are called to believe. Whoever is not elect can only ever have temporary faith, and their fruit will not be to eternal life, and their heart will never be thoroughly changed. Given that all Christians are sceptical about the quality of the fruit they have produced, and equally unsure or unhappy about the depth of their heart-felt responses to both sin and holiness, where can assurance be finally found?

The first point that Goodwin makes is that according to Eph.1:13&14 the sealing of the Spirit is a distinct work from that work of the Spirit which is faith.

Goodwin starts by rejecting the position of Calvin and Piscator, that the sealing is the work of faith itself, that faith both assures of the truth of the propositions of the Gospel and assures of the individual's personal interest or involvement in those propositions.

Goodwin accepts that knowing these things to be true is a work of the Holy Spirit and that in Job 33:16 this kind of truth-authentication is called a sealing. But, this sealing of Eph.1:13 is not a sealing of propositions, an authentication of truths, but a sealing of persons. It is not the veracity of facts that is established. It is people who are attested as really involved in the previously authenticated truths.

This sealing cannot be achieved by believing, because the text reads "having believed you were sealed". If knowing the truth of the propositions by a sealing produced faith then it would read "through sealing you believed" - this would make the sealing of the Spirit the cause of faith.

Goodwin next rejects the idea that this sealing is to do with receiving the image of God as a seal leaves an imprint on wax. Goodwin does not attribute this view to anyone in particular, but it was first proposed by Basil of Caesarea. Goodwin grants that this may be a secondary aspect of the sealing, but it is not what Paul is driving at, for the principles of sanctification are presupposed by faith. Faith is an expression of a new life, a new direction. In fact, Goodwin describes faith as part of the renewed image of God in the human heart.

The main mistake made here, Goodwin claims, is supposing that the main job of a seal is to leave an imprint. This is not the case. The main

purpose of a seal is to make a thing certain, to testify to its authenticity. The image is a consequence of this purpose. So then, what is the seal?

1. It is a work of the Holy Spirit: it is not the Spirit Himself. He is not the seal, but the sealer.

2. It is a metaphor. But which use of the word is being used? Goodwin examines a few possibilities, including the still popular example of a merchant sealing goods to distinguish them from other merchant's goods.

Goodwin is quite sharp against all such proposals.

I cut off all such interpretations in a word or two. And the first is this: that you have all these upon believing, as well as after believing. You are distinguished from other men, you are sealed in that sense, you are appropriated to God when you are first converted; but this sealing is after believing.<sup>215</sup>

Neither can this sealing be making salvation itself sure as this has been fully, completely, objectively done in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. This sealing of Eph 1v.13 is to make the Christian sure of their salvation, "to persuade their hearts". Just as when Jeremiah bought land in ch.32v.10 he had it publicly sealed with witnesses, so that the people knew what he had done, so a seal is to make a thing sure to those to whom it concerns.

The inward work here of sealing answereth to the outward work of baptism.... the end of baptism is to be a seal.... Salvation is made sure upon believing; but you are baptized, that is the seal to confirm - BUT the seal of the Spirit cometh as the fruit of

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<sup>215</sup> Vol.1, pp.230-231

baptism, which is the proper work of it. The inward seal answereth to the outward.<sup>216</sup>

So, having set the theological background, Goodwin proposes that there are basically two kinds of assurance available to the Christian. There is an assurance gained through confidence in the promises of the Bible that are conditional upon belief. This same kind of assurance may be gained in self-examination of the heart and life to see the imprint of the image of God there, to see the 'marks of grace' as sanctification progresses. But, there is another kind of assurance which is immediate from the Holy Spirit Himself. Goodwin describes the first kind of assurance as 'discursive' i.e. "a man gathereth that God loveth him from the effects, as we gather there is a fire because there is smoke". The other kind of assurance is described as 'intuitive'<sup>217</sup> i.e. "there is a light that cometh and overpowereth a man's soul, and assureth him that God is his, and he is God's, and that God loveth him from everlasting.... When the Holy Ghost cometh to seal up salvation, he will have no witnesses but himself".

Goodwin concludes the doctrinal section of his first sermon with a few observations.

The work of faith is a distinct thing from the work of assurance. In all faith there is an assurance of the truth of the Gospel promises, but in the

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<sup>216</sup> Vol.1, p.232

<sup>217</sup> Whether this concept has come to Goodwin from Scotus via Calvin, or more probably directly cannot be determined as Goodwin gives no sources for any of his material in this series of sermons. It seems fairly likely that he had read, carefully, the work of Duns Scotus, because the themes of personalism as opposed to legalism; intuitive knowledge as well as reasoned knowledge; and love as the motivating attribute of God, all occur throughout Goodwin's work.

sealing there is an assurance of an individual's involvement or personal interest in these promises.

This sealing is in the context of faith, but it is "faith elevated and raised up above its ordinary rate; as Stephen's eye with which he saw Christ was his natural sight, but it was his natural sight elevated, raised up above the ordinary proportion of an eye; so is this, a light beyond the ordinary light of faith".<sup>218</sup>

Goodwin is quick to stress that this sealing does not involve the revelation of new truths, but is an application to a particular individual of revealed Gospel truths i.e. it is a particularization by the Spirit of the general truths of the Bible.

"The foundation of God stands sure, having this seal 'The Lord knows who are His'" (II Tim 2:19) . Goodwin makes much of this verse. The seal of God is that He knows who are His. The seal by the Spirit to the Christian is the impress of this very seal of God upon the Christian's heart - "The Lord knows you to be His".

Goodwin ends the sermon by rejecting Piscator's translation of the verse: *per quod etiam quum credidistis* - at the same time that you believed.

But, my brethren, it is not *pisteuantes*, believing....; but it is *pisteusantes*, it is of the time past, when ye had believed; having believed you were sealed.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Vol.1, p.237

<sup>219</sup> Vol.1, pp.237-238



Concerning this matter of the translation, I could only find Piscator's translation in the first edition of the N.I.V., which in the second and subsequent editions was corrected to Goodwin's translation "having believed".

The latest revision of the Blass and DeBrunner Grammar of New Testament Greek states, concerning the aorist participle:

Participles originally had no temporal function, but denoted only the Aktionsart; their temporal relation to the finite verb was derived from the context. Since, however, a participle expressing the notion of completion often preceded the finite verb so that the sequence normally was: the completion of the action denoted by the participle, then the action of the finite verb, the idea of relative past time became associated to a certain degree with the aorist participle.<sup>220</sup>

*taber*

Taking this view of belief in relation to the sealing by the Spirit, Goodwin analyses the apostles themselves, showing that they were believers and they trusted God by faith before they had received the seal of the Spirit. Goodwin sums this point up:

Jesus Christ must first be mine, before I can say He is mine... therefore necessarily an act of faith must go before an act of assurance.<sup>221</sup>

We can examine Goodwin's two other sermons on this subject more briefly, because he tends to repeat his earlier points.

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<sup>220</sup> Blass and Debrunner, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature (Chicago, 1961) p.174

<sup>221</sup> Vol.1, p.239

He begins by insisting that the sealing of the Spirit is not some abstract sensation or vague feeling.

It is a light that doth not leave you to think, 'This may be my own thoughts', but an overpowering light.<sup>222</sup>

This sealing is not just a consciousness of the Infinite or an incomprehensible, indescribable, contentless feeling. It is a personal, relational, communicative encounter initiated by God the Holy Spirit with the Christian.

Next, Goodwin concentrates on the fact that the sealing is "in Christ" - "en ho". This shows, first, that the sealing assures the Christian that they are really in union with Christ, but, second, it shows that the sealing is done by virtue of Christ. Here, Goodwin employs one of his favourite theological axioms: "Whatsoever work God doth upon us, He doth unto Christ first".

We died to sin because he died; we rose from sin because he rose; we are sealed because he was once sealed, and by virtue of that we come to be sealed.<sup>223</sup>

Goodwin understands this sealing of the Son, mentioned in John 6:27, as referring to the baptism and anointing with the Spirit found in Matt 3:17. Again, Goodwin emphasizes that baptism is the outward seal, and this witness of the Spirit is the inward work, the fruit of baptism, which is to be waited for after the outward seal of baptism. Jesus experienced the inner seal immediately after his baptism i.e. the fruit of his baptism was shown without

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<sup>222</sup> Vol.1, p.242

<sup>223</sup> Vol.1, p.244

delay. The inward seal is an immediate witness of the Holy Spirit as Jesus heard the voice of the Father saying, "this is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased".

Will you have me speak plainly? Though he had the assurance of faith that he was the Son of God, he knew it out of the Scriptures by reading all the prophets; yea, and as Adam had it written in his heart that he was the son of God, so Christ had the like instinct and law in his spirit that he was the Son of God; yet to have it sealed to him with joy unspeakable and glorious, by the witness of all three Persons, this was deferred to the time of his baptism. He was then 'anointed with the Holy Ghost'. He (the Holy Spirit) hath sealed and anointed us, just as he sealed and anointed Christ in his baptism. We are conformed unto Christ; look what was wrought upon him, is wrought upon believers.... so now, we are sealed in him, by virtue of him, and by his being sealed.<sup>224</sup>

By taking the biography of Jesus as his basic model, Goodwin is able to gain a point of Christological grounding for his understanding of the sealing. It is at the sealing and anointing of Jesus that his status as the Son of God is authenticated and made immediate to him. Taking the humanity of Christ so seriously, in this way, enables Goodwin to understand Christ as a realistic pattern and example for the Christian life. He establishes some points of genuine continuity in the experience of the Incarnate God with the experience of His brothers and sisters. Goodwin always vigorously resists any tendency to portray Jesus as the Eternal Logos disguised as a human, living incognito amongst mere human beings.

Goodwin examines the events of Pentecost and concludes that as one who has repented and believed, the Christian must wait for a further

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<sup>224</sup> Vol.1, p.245

promise of the Holy Spirit as sealer. Goodwin exhorts his hearers to "sue it out with God.... My brethren, it is the great fruit of your baptism; you have not that great fruit of your baptism till you have this. Therefore you shall find that it is called 'baptizing with the Holy Ghost', because it is that which is the fruit of your baptism, it answereth that outward seal".<sup>225</sup>

Assurance is not only for a few elite Christians. Goodwin is careful to avoid a two-tier Christianity. In his sermon on Eph 1:18 he states clearly that assurance is for every Christian:

That every man in the state of grace is called to have assurance, and there are grounds enough for it.<sup>226</sup>

As the Jews waited for Christ "serving God night and day", so we must serve God "day and night faithfully", walking humbly for "there is a promise of the Holy Ghost to come and fill your hearts with joy unspeakable and glorious, to seal you up to the day of redemption".

The whole flavour of Goodwin at this point is like an echo of Symeon the New Theologian (942-1022). It is quite fascinating to notice how both Goodwin and Symeon chart the same course through a variety of theological issues, from the importance of the ascended Christ to the necessity of the Holy Spirit for authentic Christian living. This theology is spiritual theology, springing from a conception of the Christian life as a vital relationship between God and the believer.

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<sup>225</sup> Vol.1, p.248

<sup>226</sup> Vol.1, p.304

Symeon regards the great blasphemy against the Holy Spirit to be denying that he can be experienced today as he was in the early church. Like Goodwin, Symeon sees the experience of Jesus, in His conscious knowledge of and union with the Father, as the model for the Christian's goal. This conscious union with the indwelling Trinity by the Holy Spirit is not only possible for the Christian, but must be sought after with all diligence, casting aside all sinful, fleshly hindrances and toiling for purity of heart.<sup>227</sup>

Goodwin preaches that the Christian is always to seek after such fillings of the Spirit, to seek after the Spirit, who can be grieved and withdraw due to our sin and hardness. Goodwin never tires of telling his congregation to never settle for anything less than an encounter with God the Holy Spirit, because only His immediate presence can dispel all the clouds of doubt and fear.

Sue this promise out, wait for it, rest not in believing only, rest not in assurance by graces only; there is a further assurance to be had... Believe that there is such a thing, aim at it, wait for it, and serve God... to obtain it... and in the end the Lord will give it. The reason why men attain it not is, because they rest in other assurance, and they do not aim at this, they content themselves with bare believing.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> The Discourses of Symeon the New Theologian, (New Jersey, 1980) pp.335-336

<sup>228</sup> Vol.1, p.249 Both John and Charles Wesley read Goodwin, and the same emphasis on the experience of assurance can be found throughout both Wesleys' works. For example, this hymn by Charles Wesley exactly duplicates Goodwin's theology:

Come, Holy Ghost, my heart inspire!  
Attest that I am born again;  
Come, and baptize me now with fire,  
Nor let Thy former gifts be vain:  
I cannot rest in sins forgiven;  
Where is the earnest of my heaven?

Goodwin does not want his hearers to all become mystics, though. He explicitly rejects a mystical, non-cognitive view of this experience. Word and Spirit go together: they cannot be taken in isolation. Goodwin warns that if our experience does not involve the application of the words of Scripture, then it is a delusion.

Therefore, when we say it is an immediate testimony, the meaning is not that it is without the Word;.. We do not speak for enthusiasms; it is the Spirit applying the Word to the heart that we speak of. It is not to write new Scripture, to make words... No, we detest all such; but it is to draw you to the Word.<sup>229</sup>

Thus, this sealing experience is not in an intellectual vacuum, nor is it in a moral vacuum. It makes the Christian live a holy life. However much the Spirit has worked holiness in the Christian's heart, He will do this much more so, when He seals. God does not grant this "joy unspeakable and glorious" to the lukewarm believer. Goodwin quotes John 14:21 with great emphasis, that it is by keeping His commandments that the believer will know the indwelling Trinity, that Christ will manifest himself to the obedient heart. Such an experience of God cannot leave the Christian untouched.

This sealing is like heaven on earth, and makes a person heavenly. Thomas Brooks, one of Goodwin's contemporaries, speaks about the same experience in a book called Heaven on Earth. In that work Brooks' thesis is

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Where the indubitable seal  
That ascertains the kingdom mine?  
The powerful stamp I long to feel,  
The signature of love divine:  
O shed it in my heart abroad,  
fulness of love, of heaven, of God!

229 Vol.1, p.251

that for a Christian to be fully assured of their future in heaven by the inner witness of the Spirit is genuinely to anticipate the very experience of heaven.<sup>230</sup>

However, Goodwin does not see the sealing as the same thing as the earnest of the Spirit. In the final sermon on Eph. 1:13&14 he begins with the assertion that it is not Christ who is the earnest of heaven, but the Holy Spirit. An earnest is a part in hand, a part of the full payment, the full possession. We have bought heaven without money, and we may receive part in hand now. We have sold ourselves to God to work righteousness and have, thus, bought an inheritance in Christ.

It is the Holy Spirit Himself who is (not "which is") the earnest of heaven, to make it sure to us. At this point in his argument Goodwin emphasizes the personhood of the Spirit in a very clear and precise manner.

We should not say of him, it, as is the usual manner amongst us to say; Lord, give us thy Spirit that it may work this or that. NO, that he may work this or that: He is a person.... His [Paul's] meaning is that the gift of the person of the Holy Ghost, taken severed from all his works in us, his person given to us to dwell in us for ever, as he is, this is the greatest earnest that God could bestow upon us of our inheritance to come.... He is an earnest in the gift of his Person..... 2 Cor 5:5, the Apostle speaks there of the person of the Holy Ghost, as an earnest given to us distinct from his graces and works in us.<sup>231</sup>

Given that the person of the Holy Spirit is so often dissolved into His functions, then this concentration on the gift of the Person of the Spirit, quite

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<sup>230</sup> The Works of Thomas Brooks, Vol.2, (Edinburgh, 1980) pp.303-533  
<sup>231</sup> Vol.1, pp.256-257

apart from his functions, must be an aspect of the Reformed tradition that needs to be brought much more into the foreground of theological thinking.

The person of the Holy Spirit is the greatest possible earnest of heaven because He is so much more than heaven and, so Goodwin argues, if the Father will give the person of His Spirit to the believer, then He will certainly give all things less, including heaven. The inheritance awaiting the Christian is God Himself, so the earnest must be God Himself.

The earnest of the Spirit is not only for the benefit of the believer, but also for God the Father, who wants insurance against the loss of what He has purchased for Himself! Knowing how prone to fall is the human heart, God gives us His Spirit to ensure that we arrive at heaven!

Although Goodwin's view was widely held amongst the Independent Puritans it did not carry the day at the Westminster Assembly. Although mention is made of the witness of the Spirit for assurance, the weight falls upon the progress of sanctification in the believer's life. The Confession states that the believer may "without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of the ordinary means" attain to an infallible certainty of assurance.

However, Goodwin's position was not just some aberration thrown up by the peculiar needs of the assurance crisis among the Puritans. In the eighteenth century Goodwin's view became the accepted norm amongst the early Methodists. The hymns are littered with references to the sealing, the direct witness of the Spirit and the experience of an earnest of heaven.

In the twentieth century this teaching has become a vital part of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, though now sealing has been



subsumed under the general heading of the Baptism of the Spirit. F.D. Bruner notes that "to be sealed" by the Spirit means exactly the same as being baptized by the Spirit in Pentecostal theology.<sup>232</sup> This is not to say that Pentecostal theology is teaching quite what Goodwin preached, but it shares his basic commitment to a Pneumatology that gives the Spirit room to work in the Christian life apart from the work of faith or regeneration.

## 10. Immediacy

It is one thing to speak of "unmediated experience of spiritual realities", but it is quite another matter to determine what precisely is being spoken of. Many theologians have wanted to (and still do) speak of immediacy with reference to God and other spiritual realities within the spiritual creation. However, the range of meaning poured into the word "immediacy" makes it quite unfruitful to simply assume one meaning of a writer when they may well have a quite different one in mind.

Therefore, I have attempted to classify the different uses of the word "immediacy" when it is used of religious experience. Other uses of the word, when it is used to refer to the wider categories of experience, have been left on one side.

1. Time. "Immediacy" can refer to an absence of intervening time. Thus "immediacy" is used to refer to the existentialist priority of the present.

However, an "immediate" experience of a spiritual reality in this sense is likely to speak of making (for example) the resurrection immediate to the

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<sup>232</sup> Bruner, A Theology of the Holy Spirit, (London, 1970) p.59

contemporary Christian, that is to say, it presupposes the desirability of making past, present and future valid only in so far as they contribute to the experience of the 'now'.

For the thing or the animal, the present only is real; the past is no longer and the future is not yet, and this means in effect that they are unreal. Only the now has reality. Perhaps we would say the same about the past and the future of the human existent, but we would say it with a difference in meaning. In the case of the existent, the past and the future may be real in a manner that lets them live, as we sometimes say, in the present... There is a quest for a wholeness of experience or an immediacy of fruition that would gather up in itself past, present and future. This could also be described as the quest for the eternal understood as a wholeness quite different from the unending successiveness of the 'everlasting'.<sup>233</sup>

It could be argued that "realized eschatology" is an example of this kind of immediacy, when it is used to refer to a experience in the here and now of something that is properly future. Does this also spring from a desire to absolutise the present, to make anything future only 'real' in so far as it has a 'sensible' stake in the present?

The danger with this approach is failing to give proper significance to past and future realities. How can one grasp the ongoing once-for-all historical reality of the death of Christ if it is to be 'reduced' to a timeless existential truth? Does this programme not also rest on the assumption of Lessing that universal, necessary, rational truths cannot rest on historical accidentals? Bultmann, in his demythologization scheme, attempts to remove

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<sup>233</sup> J Macquarrie, Existentialism, (Middlesex, 1972) pp.200-201

from the Bible all the merely historical aspects in order to get at the timeless, existential truths that lie at the heart.<sup>234</sup>

2. 'Distance'. "Immediacy" can refer to an absence of intervening distance, although this "distance" may be only a perceived distance. That which is normally 'distant' takes priority, in the attention of the subject, over that which under the usual state of human perceptions is considered to be immediate. Thus, the material creation is usually (at least by realists) regarded as our immediate experience. However, in a direct experience of spiritual realities, the spiritual creation may be described as "immediately" experienced.<sup>235</sup>

This kind of idea seems to be present in one of the Biblical understandings of a "vision" or "revelation". The revelation of Jesus Christ to John on Patmos is such an occasion: spiritual realities take experiential priority over material realities, while he was "in the Spirit".

If Paul's II Corinthian 4 v18 teaching, that the unseen is lasting, alone worthy of consideration, and the seen is temporary, not worthy of consideration, is to be taken as a philosophical starting point, then an experience of the (normally) unseen, unexperienced spiritual creation is an experience of what is finally the case: an "immediate" awareness of ultimate reality.

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<sup>234</sup> Bultmann, The Theology of the New Testament, Vol.1, (London, 1952) p.299: "Christ's death and resurrection, accordingly, are cosmic occurrences, not incidents that took place once upon a time in the past".

<sup>235</sup> It could be argued that it is this kind of immediacy that underlies Tillich's view of revelation. See, for example, his discussion of the revelatory character of saints in Systematic Theology, Vol.1, (London, 1953) pp.134-138

However, this immediacy of 'distance' is more to do with the perceived distance of the subject than any necessary distance involved in the thing experienced. This is its difficulty, in that it is difficult to express clearly what is being said. The 'distance' can only ever be a subjective perception of distance.

3. Agencies. "Immediacy" can refer to an absence of intervening agencies. This includes the philosophical commitment to Realism covering everything from 'naive' Realism, which suggests that there is a straight line between experience and reality, to 'critical' Realism, which "acknowledges the reality of the thing known, as something other than the knower (hence 'realism'), while also fully acknowledging that the only access we have to this reality lies along the spiralling path of appropriate dialogue or conversation between the knower and the thing known (hence 'critical')".<sup>236</sup>

This kind of "immediacy" is in some kind of opposition to various kinds of Phenomenalism and/or Idealism.

The pessimistic side of the Enlightenment programme can be most clearly seen in certain more modest forms of empiricism, not least phenomenism. The only thing of which I can be really sure when confronted by things in (what seems to be) the external world are my own sense-data. This view, with an apparent epistemological humility, therefore translates talk about external objects (this is a mug) into statements about sense-data (I am aware of hard, round, smooth and warm feelings in my hands).<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> N.T. Wright, The New Testament and the People of God, p.35  
<sup>237</sup> Ibid. p.34

So, although a Realist may well be aware of the need to reflect upon one's experience critically, yet there is a commitment to the belief that reality is directly experienced. The Realist rejects the notion of sense-data, and the philosophy of phenomenological mediation. Instead the Realist believes in data about reality, rather than data about the human senses.

In Kant's epic methodological work, he seeks to ground the achievements of reason upon a sound basis. He does this by rejecting both Realism and Idealism, and adopting his conception of regulative reason. Things cannot be known through experience, because we have only the form, the sense-data or phenomena, the subjective perception of the things (not the things-in-themselves), but neither can things be known through bare contemplation, because theories must be grounded and tested by experience. By making the *a priori* categories for understanding inherent in the human mind, and making intuition (*Anschauung*- immediate perception) the reception of sense-data which has been 'filtered' through the *a priori* categories of space and time, then reality-in-itself is totally inaccessible to human knowledge, although claims about reality-in-itself can find a place in belief.

In the post-Kantian world, those who believe in "immediacy" want to talk about experiencing reality-in-itself, without the intervening agencies of sense-data and without *a priori* categories that are alien to reality itself. That is why a philosopher like Van Til is so keen to integrate the Creator with the creation, taking the creatureliness of humanity so seriously. As we have seen if one is to avoid the conclusions of Kant, then one must have a properly worked out doctrine of creation, that displays that the creation is made to be known by the human mind, and that the human mind is designed to know the creation-in-itself, in both its spiritual and material aspects. In the light of such an epistemology one can talk of "immediate" experiences of reality, which apart

from the mediation of the Spirit in a regenerate human, cannot extend to the spiritual creation.

Thus, the agencies of body and mind that are considered to mediate experience are rejected by a theologian using "immediacy" in this way, whether they are a naive or critical Realist, i.e. one immediately experiences reality not one's body or one's mind.

The question concerns the justifiability of a certain *practice* - the practice of forming physical-object beliefs directly on the basis of perception rather than as an explanation of what is perceived or experienced... If I may use the term "objectification" for "taking an experience to be an experience of something of a certain sort", then we may say that the practice in question is a certain kind of objectification of sense experience, an objectification in terms of independently existing.. objects.<sup>238</sup>

4. Means of Grace. "Immediacy" can refer to an absence of any of the means of grace. Particularly in Pietist literature, there is a tendency to use "immediacy" to mean a direct experience of God apart from the mediation of the means of grace. "Means of grace" in this context usually refers to preaching, baptism, the Lord's Supper, or Bible reading. Thus, "immediacy" in this sense seems to be a kind of mystical religious experience. It is built upon the notion that God can be met and experienced by the human person, without any of His prescribed forms of mediation.

In some forms of anti-ritual polemic there can be heard an appeal to "immediate" experiences of the Spirit, and this appeal should be interpreted

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<sup>238</sup> William Alston in Faith and Rationality, (London, 1983) on "Christian Experience and Christian Belief", p.109. He goes on to argue against phenomenalism in both physical and spiritual terms.

*eds. Peter*

under this kind of usage.<sup>239</sup> There is a danger of docetism (or at least straight dualism) if this view of immediacy is taken too far.

It seems that very profound consequences are at stake in this use of immediacy. Has not God given or revealed the way in which He would be approached? Has He not indicated the places where He will meet with His people, and an attempt to go behind or beyond these seems to be a rejection, in some sense, of His given means of encounter?

5. Thought/Words. "Immediacy" can be used to refer to the absence of words or thoughts intervening in an encounter with God. It can describe a non-propositional kind of encounter with God, one beyond words or even thoughts.

This kind of usage of the word is most associated with the mystical and apaphatic tradition. G. Wainwright, in describing the English Mystics, says that their mysticism referred to "a state of love for God and knowledge of him utterly different from anything previously experienced, profounder than what may be achieved by the processes of rational thought, and ultimately incommunicable".<sup>240</sup>

This kind of immediacy is the most problematic of all, in that, if it is to be taken at face value it is a radical split between Word and Spirit. Spirit becomes the real, the unconditioned, the ultimate, whereas Word is a lesser, watered-down version for those unable to move on to the deeper experience.

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<sup>239</sup> See, for example, David Pyches, Some said it Thundered (London, 1990).

<sup>240</sup> Wainwright (Editor), A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality, (London, 1983) p.130

Word seems to be fatally compromised by making direct experience of God beyond words or rational thought.

Surely one of the most marvellous aspects of the Incarnation is the revelation of God ('the exact representation of God') in the terms of flesh, under all the restraints and confinements of fallen flesh. In seeing Jesus, even after the flesh, one has seen the Father, the unseen (unseeable?) Father. The scandal of this to the Islamic mind (as to any Aristotelian mind), is that God can be expressed, accurately described, according to the language and forms that He has used in His Self-revelation. An apophatic theology can only go so far until it actually denies the revelation that God has made of Himself. Can the God whose Word is God and was with God, finally be beyond thought or words? Without wanting to be too positivistic, is not human language also redeemed, in some sense, by the Incarnation?

'Joy unspeakable', although it may be *de facto* beyond the precise definition of ordinary human speech, must be very different to 'hate unspeakable'. The two experiences, or emotions, may have depths, nuances, aspects that defy the unsophisticated vocabulary of ordinary language, yet they are starkly differentiated from each other, even to a person who has experienced only very 'speakable' forms of those two emotions. Communicating the experience of 'joy unspeakable' is not analogous to describing colour to a blind man. If the *Imago Dei* is really concerned with persons-in-relation then we do have an analogy of relations by which to comprehend the contours of an encounter with the divine Persons.

6. Persons. "Immediacy" may be used to refer to the absence of persons intervening between the subject and object of experience. This



usage seems to presuppose that as long as two persons may meet 'face to face' then they may have an 'immediate' encounter.

This kind of "immediacy" claim may go hand in hand with the claim to have an "immediate" experience of God in sense 4.

This sense of immediacy is used to differentiate experience of God in a 'person to person' encounter as opposed to God being mediated through the persons of the Church community, whether 'clergy' or the Church as the Body of God's people properly considered.

Nevertheless, the real danger here is to confuse the divine Person and the human person in the immediacy of the experience. H.D. Lewis tends to describe the characteristic of all mystical experience as "the alleged directness or immediacy of our union with God.... In one of its major forms this claim is thought to involve the annulment of our finite status; there is nothing between us and God because we are (or become) strictly one with God in a way which makes all separation and division unreal".<sup>241</sup>

Much nineteenth century Idealism had the tendency to become monistic, making all forms of reality simply differentiated aspects of the One, involving an association of God and the world/history/humanity. This kind of thought spawns its own breed of mysticism and immediacy.

Under this usage of "immediacy" we may have got to the heart of the problem of immediacy. Is it possible to have a direct person-to-person

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<sup>241</sup> H.D. Lewis, The Philosophy of Religion, (London, 1965) p.200

experience of the One who dwells in eternity? H.D. Lewis argues that a claim to have such an experience is quite incredible.

This holds, it seems to me, of the claim to have an immediate contact with God. It is not just that there is strong evidence against this, that the prophets, for example, usually declare that the God they have come to know is also a God who 'hides himself', it is not that we have not had this sort of experience ourselves and need to be cautious in admitting the likelihood of a very remarkable claim. We know from the outset that there could be no immediate contact with God. For this would surely imply that we knew expressly what it was like to be God. We would be aware of God as He is- in His essence. But one of the things we need to stress most about God is that He is transcendent in a way that precludes this. The way we recognize His existence involves His being a Reality of that kind. To claim to know God directly, in the strict sense, is like claiming to have found a square-circle.<sup>242</sup>

The problem is that it may not be possible to speak of immediate encounters between persons, whether they are divine-human experiences or human-human experiences. Is not our experience of one another inherently mediated, in that one does not know the precise content of another person's mind, no matter how intimately involved with them one may be? Is talk of "immediacy" really an attempt to collapse the subject-object distinction, to make the thing experienced and the person experiencing the same thing? Is Buber's I-Thou relation a genuine superseding of the subject-object relation or is it misconstrued in this way? Knowledge of the other is a necessary part of relationship. Awareness of the otherness of the other is, perhaps, the defining moment in the concept of relationship. If "immediacy" of persons can be construed as nothing other than a merging of persons or an identification of persons, then there is no relationship anymore: it is no longer a divine-human

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<sup>242</sup> Ibid. p.204

encounter or experience, because the human (presumably) has simply ceased to be. But, this is a denial of orthodox Christianity in that the Creator/creature distinction is lost.

A face to face, person to person, experience of another human person can only be described as "immediate" within very tight limits. It certainly cannot mean an identification of the two persons. The subject-object relation must be maintained if one is to articulate Christian theology, rather than some form of Monism. If I am to encounter another person my words, ideas and thoughts are inevitably mediated to them through my own body, in speech or action. I must, in some sense, mediate myself to the person I encounter. The encounter is "immediate" in that it is I who am encountered and not another. Yet, it is "mediated" in that I act as my own mediator to the other person, I represent myself to them in recognized forms of communication, in forms of self-expression that are meaningful to them. This "mediated immediacy" seems to be the only kind of sense that can be given to "immediacy" in sense 6.

We can gather all these 6 usages of "immediacy" into a table of meaning and difficulties.

Meaning	Difficulties
1. Time	Over-emphasis on the present
2. Distance	Subjectively orientated
3. Agencies	The Phenomenologist critique
4. Means of Grace	Loss of the Bible, Tradition and the Church
5. Thought/Words	Separation of Word and Spirit
6. Persons	Possible loss of the Subject-Object distinction

Having mapped out the main usages of the concept of "immediacy", it is now possible to examine Thomas Goodwin on each of the six possible meanings and, thus, come to an understanding of what he has in mind.

## 11. Goodwin's Immediacy

The concept of "immediate" experiences of God crops up throughout the works of Goodwin in a variety of different settings, but it seems that he always has the same kind of experience in view.

1. Time. Goodwin does not seem to use "immediacy" in the sense of making the present transparent to key historical events. He does not seem to be self-consciously using the Augustinian philosophy of time that establishes the priority of the present. Goodwin does not want to talk of the perceived timelessness of experiences of God, in that he is quite happy to talk about such experience going on for about an hour.

2. Distance. Goodwin definitely uses this concept of immediacy to mean the experience of objects/persons who exist in the spiritual creation, even though this world of experience is not normally available to the human senses. He sees the fallen human condition, even under the influence of common grace, as confined to merely 'natural' objects of knowledge, but the regenerate human may be introduced to objects of knowledge that pertain to the 'unseen' world of the spiritual creation. This, as we saw in his doctrine of Scripture, plays a key role in his explanation of human knowledge and experience.

A regenerate man hath the Spirit of God dwelling in him, which a man unregenerate hath not; that Spirit to whom all things are continually present, though absent from us; and therefore, he dwelling in the man, can set those things before him.<sup>243</sup>

3. Agencies. Goodwin would agree with Kant's analysis that it is not possible for humans to know what they do not experience. However, Goodwin does not describe the spiritual creation as supersensible, in the sense of being beyond human experience. The regenerate human finds a whole new world of experience opened up to them in Christ. Regeneration includes the reception of spiritual senses that enable the 'objects' of the spiritual creation to be genuinely experienced, although the Holy Spirit is the One who introduces the human subject to these various 'objects' of knowledge.

I quote at length from Vol.10, where Goodwin is engaged in a thorough analysis of these very issues. He sets out his view carefully as he grapples with the difference in knowledge, or capacity for knowledge between the regenerate and unregenerate mind.

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<sup>243</sup> Vol.10, p.163

[The Spirit of God] who calls things that are not as if they were, can also present to us things absent, and represent them as they are. Nor can he only do this, but also open our eyes and put a principle into us to behold those things which he placeth bare and naked to our sight. This is an art peculiar to himself, which no angel nor creature can imitate..... The things God hath prepared,-justification, adoption, sanctification, glory,- all these are prepared from everlasting, which things eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have they entered into the heart of a man, that is, a natural man.. Now, his meaning then is, that there is such a revelation, such a species, form and image of these things in their minds (who love God, and have them revealed by the Spirit), as their eyes never saw... That is, the *species propriae*, the true proper images of the things they never received, however they may have them from other men's reports. Their eyes may see them, as so described, and their ears hear them, as so reported, and they may see them too by the pictures drawn by the Holy Ghost, and represented by Him in the Word of God; for the Holy Ghost in so doing (as in enlightening temporaries) deceives them not, as a painter doth not who draws the true picture of a man; yet still the spiritual, living, and real manner of presenting these things to the mind of the Holy Ghost vouchsafes to none but unto those who love God, and so are regenerate; it is to them and them only this favour is conferred.<sup>244</sup>

Goodwin goes on to argue that the unregenerate mind can have no real knowledge (or "knowing knowledge"<sup>245</sup>) of spiritual matters since it does not have experiential access to the things themselves. Hearsay is no basis for true knowledge. To know of a person is not at all like knowing them through personal experience. Mere pictures of things are not like seeing the things themselves. "For they do not know them spiritually... in their native colour, and hue, and proper likeness, so as to form concepts in our minds of them as homogenous, and proportioned to the things".<sup>246</sup> Thus, Goodwin can say that

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<sup>244</sup> Vol.10, pp.163-164

<sup>245</sup> Vol.10, p.164

<sup>246</sup> Vol.10, p.164

the knowledge which "a godly man hath of spiritual things is an evident, infallible, satisfying knowledge".<sup>247</sup> How can this be? It is because the "sight" of "a real true thing leaves an evidence behind it that it is true. Christ having a real true body appeals to the judgement of the senses to testify that it was so. What though a man's eye may be deceived by apparitions, and in dreams things are so lively painted out in our fancies, that men think they see, and hear, and eat? yet this prejudiceth not, but that a man who eats true meat knows infallibly he is not deceived".<sup>248</sup>

Goodwin is committed to this kind of empiricism, and will not even be side-tracked by coherentism.

Other men may think spiritual things to be true, because of their fine and exact coherence, and the whole system of them is so fair a story; but a godly man knows them to be true, and gives a certain infallible assent to the story, whereof he is an eye-witness, for he sees the things done and acted in his own heart.<sup>249</sup>

This concern for a direct experience of the objects of knowledge has possibly carried Goodwin over into a kind of immediacy in sense 1. Goodwin's remarks here bear a striking similarity to a comment in Barth's CD 1/1:

In [the] antithesis of the unique and the universal, the empirical and the rational Kant's philosophy of religion still moves, but certainly not Lessing's any longer, in this respect much the more modern of the two. Lessing recognizes perfectly well a proof of Christianity by history. But it must be "the proof of the Spirit and of power"; i.e. history proves us no truth, so long as it is

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<sup>247</sup> Vol.10, p.165

<sup>248</sup> Vol.10, pp.165-166

<sup>249</sup> Vol.10, p.166

"accidental truth of history", truth merely told us by others but not as such "felt" or "experienced" as such by us...<sup>250</sup>

It is Goodwin's first steps towards a concept of the "contemporaneousness" of the Word of God that provide the bridge over the "broad ugly ditch" that Lessing was to point to. Spiritual realities must be experienced, "felt", if they are to become part of our "knowing knowledge".

4. Means of Grace. Goodwin is clear that there can be no experience of God apart from the means of grace, considered as Scripture, preaching and sacraments. Although he does at times appear to talk as if the Spirit gives experiences of spiritual realities quite out of the context of Word or Sacraments, a closer reading of Goodwin shows that that is not the case. There can be no understanding, comprehension or expression of spiritual realities without the given noetic structures of Scripture.<sup>251</sup> He warns, as we saw in his consideration of assurance, that there are no true religious experiences that are not focused upon the Word. However, that Word cannot be grasped without the Spirit.

But, my brethren, whatsoever power on earth shall be set up, the great end and scope of God in writing the Scriptures, is to make things known to his saints.... He hath given to his saints his Spirit, who writ the Scriptures, who knows the meaning of all the mysteries therein, and he is the supreme judge.... Here is my word, here is my spirit, saith he. Wherever God hath a saint, he doth by the ministry of the word convey his Spirit into that saint's heart, and teacheth him this mystery.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> C.D., I/1, p.166

<sup>251</sup> Pannenberg, in his Introduction to Systematic Theology (Edinburgh, 1991) argues that our immediate experiences of spiritual realities need to be submitted to some kind of hermeneutical framework in order for such experience to become meaningful.

<sup>252</sup> Vol.4, p.305



When we examine Goodwin's use of "immediacy" in sense 5, we will see that the Spirit uses the pictures and language of the Bible to reflect spiritual realities. What are the spiritual realities that the Christian sees by the Spirit? They are none other than the "realities" of justification, sanctification and glory in Christ Jesus. We come to an awareness of these things through the revealed Scriptures, and then the Spirit introduces to the realities that these words point to in the Risen and Ascended Christ.

Speaking of the authority to send the Spirit given to Christ at his Ascension Goodwin writes,

[H]e instantly poured out his Spirit, and that 'richly'... So Eph.1v.8, it is said, 'He ascended up on high, and gave gifts to men... for the work of ministry (ver. 15), and for the jointing in of the saints to the increase of the body of Christ' (ver.16)... And the gifts there mentioned (some of them) remain unto this day, in 'pastors and teachers', &c. And this Spirit is still in our preaching and in your hearts, in hearing, in praying, &c., and persuades you of Christ's love to this very day; and is in all these the pledge of the continuance of Christ's love still in heaven unto sinners. All our sermons and your prayers are evidences to you, that Christ's heart is still the same towards sinners that ever it was, for the Spirit that assists in all these, comes in his name, and in his stead, and works all by commission from him.... He also follows us to the sacrament, and in that glass shews us Christ's face smiling on us, and through his face his heart; and thus helping us to a sight of him, we go away rejoicing that we saw our Saviour that day.<sup>253</sup>

Only Paul has had an experience of Christ that Goodwin calls "immediate" in sense four; that is, he heard Christ address him "from no man, apostle or other, but by the immediate revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven,

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<sup>253</sup> Vol.4, pp.107-108

as he speaks Gal.i.11,12".<sup>254</sup> With that exception, the Christian comes to a knowledge of the truth through the preaching of the Word which is experienced when the Spirit, through regeneration, brings a person into 'contact' with the spiritual realities in Christ.

5. Thought/Words. Goodwin addresses this sense of "immediacy" fairly directly. He discusses how a picture can never contain all that is in the thing itself. Direct contact with the thing itself will always show what was lacking in the picture.

Now, then, answerably there is something in God, and Christ, and the work of grace, which all the expressions of the tongues of men and angels, all openings of Scripture do not, and cannot make known, unless the Spirit strike in with his art, and use all these as glasses to represent the things to you, as he doth to the saints. The native glory of them goes beyond expression, which all fall short of the life; and yet a man, who hath seen the things, can but use the like expressions, if he would go about to describe them (which expressions, one who hath not seen the things, may use as well as he), but yet he knows more than he can express..... [The regenerate man] seeth what cannot be painted or described, and therefore to make it known to the other man, he must lend him his eyes, for nothing else will be able to make him see it..... Thus,.. there is a new name given which none knows but he who receives it, Rev.ii.18; that is, there is something in it which he cannot express to another, for if he could, then that other might know as well as he.<sup>255</sup>

Goodwin is not saying that the direct experiences of spiritual realities are beyond words in the sense that words are somehow inappropriate to the experiences. However, words cannot do full justice to the experiences. Goodwin applies this same principle to two men talking about a country: one has only seen a map of the country, has a grasp of the customs and has

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<sup>254</sup> Vol.4, p.108

<sup>255</sup> Vol.10, p.165

"heard all these described as fully as can be expressed"; whereas the other has visited the country, travelled through it and seen its cities with his own eyes. The second man knows something of the country that the first man does not, he has a richer, an experiential knowledge that the first man has not, even though he may have an exhaustive 'hearsay' knowledge of the country.

In Brunner's Truth as Encounter, he attempts to dissolve the subject-object 'antithesis', because he argues that it obscures the nature of faith. Someone who 'gives himself' is no longer an object, but a Thou, and fellowship has occurred.

The concept of truth determined by the subject-object antithesis which deals with "something true" is indeed foreign to what is ultimately the concern of faith. The fact remains that in faith we are dealing, not with truths, not even with divinely revealed truths, but with God, with Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit. But, on the other hand, this conception of truth or the truth presumed in it is indispensable as instrument, as framework, as token of that which is the concern of faith.... God gives himself to us in no other way than that he says something to us, namely, the truth about himself; and we cannot enter into fellowship with him, we cannot give ourselves to him in trustful obedience, otherwise than by believing "what" he says to us.<sup>256</sup>

It seems that Brunner is trying to get at the same kind of thing that Goodwin wants to express. Goodwin does not want to dissolve the subject-object relation, but he does want to say that faith has an object (Jesus Christ) and in him there are immediate experiences of grace to be had which are not contained in mere words. In other words, the reality is more than the words that describe that reality. There is a level of truth, a character of truth, that is given in encounter, whether with persons, places or things, which goes

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<sup>256</sup> Brunner, Truth as Encounter, (Philadelphia, 1943) p.134

beyond any verbal description, no matter how exhaustive that verbal description is. Goodwin extends the concept of "truth as encounter" to all objects of knowledge without distinction. Goodwin does not make personal encounter something which is not subject to subject-object analysis. By taking all knowledge as fully realized only in experienced encounter, Goodwin is able to draw a strict line between the non-Christian (unregenerate) and the Christian (regenerate and indwelt by the Spirit). Goodwin seems to make 'faith' the direct experience of these realities for oneself by the Holy Spirit.

Whenas there cometh a created light into a man's soul by the Holy Ghost, joining with the gospel which speaks of Christ, he who is a believer, by his eye of faith taking in that beam of light, beholdeth Jesus Christ, that image of God, beholdeth the glory of Christ in the gospel thus described, in such a manner as no creature else is able to apprehend.<sup>257</sup>

Goodwin is careful to make the revelation of Christ to the eye of faith dependent upon both the preached gospel and the light of the Spirit. Both are needed to give the experience of the reality. He goes on.

The understanding understandeth everything *per phantasma*, as we say, the fancy of a man.... Whenever you hear a story told of a thing done in such a place, by such or such a person, still your fancy will be working the image of that thing or person in your mind, though it be a story told you never heard before; for God hath appointed the fancy to give the mind a subsistence of what it understandeth. Now when God cometh to reveal spiritual things, the fancy could never take them in, it could never give any subsistence to them, it hath no images to make of them. What therefore doth God do? He createth faith. And what is faith? It is not *phantasia*, but *hypostasia*, it gives a subsistence (so the apostle saith, Heb.xi), a reality to the things we understand, even as the image of a man in a glass is a real

thing, it is a subsistence; so God and Christ, they have a subsistence, a reality in a man's spirit.<sup>258</sup>

Goodwin is making faith the key to understanding the words, the vocabulary, of the spiritual realm. The words revealed in the gospel do not do full justice to the reality, but because they mirror a subsisting image created in the regenerate human spirit, then they have the material from which to speak meaningfully, to understand.

[I]t comes to pass, that the soul doth form up out of the gospel glorious apprehensions of Christ, for as the gospel holds forth Jesus Christ in his glory really, so by the help of the Spirit, the same image that is in the gospel is begot in my heart of this Jesus Christ; that is, real and glorious apprehensions I have of him, which are wrought in me in and by the gospel, and according to what the gospel describeth of him..... You may hear of him by hearsay, as of other things, but if.. there shine into your hearts but a beam from himself by his Spirit, it doth convey the reality of Christ to you, it makes Christ to be in you, as the text saith, although you do not see him face to face.<sup>259</sup>

Goodwin here seems to have replaced his immediacy with a definite "mediated" experience of God. Yet, Goodwin so frequently talks of direct or immediate experiences of God the Holy Spirit, that we should not lose sight of his argument. He is arguing that we have immediate experiences of the Spirit, but the content of these experiences is a mediated experience of Christ, projected into the regenerate heart by the Spirit, where a subsisting image of Christ may be formed, as a reflection in the "glass" of the gospel brought home by faith.

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<sup>258</sup> Vol.4, p.322

<sup>259</sup> Vol.4, p.323

From this we must conclude that any experience of Christ must be mediated through the immediate work of the Spirit. Goodwin would not want to talk about immediate experiences of Jesus Christ.

So, immediate experiences of the Spirit are by no means beyond words, in the sense that words are left behind as one soars up to God in Himself. Words are the very vehicle that the Spirit uses to frame the mediated experience of Christ in the regenerate heart. The Spirit's immediate work is not an end in itself, as if such an experience were self-explanatory or merely for the 'experience' value of it. No, an immediate experience of the Spirit finds its *telos* in a mediated experience of Christ, because it is in Christ that God may be known. We cannot know God in the Spirit apart from Christ: this would be a denial of the Trinity and the Person and Work of Christ. The Spirit's work is to mediate Christ the Mediator.

6. **Persons:** Goodwin constantly exhorts his congregation (and readers) to know God experimentally for themselves, not to be satisfied with God experienced through the members of the local church. That indirect knowledge of God is roundly bracketed under the category of 'hearsay'. "Knowing God directly for oneself" is very important for Goodwin, because this kind of direct knowledge of God is a sure sign of salvation.

We have seen that Goodwin does not take this "immediacy" in any way like a merging of persons, a union of the divine and human persons. The knowledge of God is mediated through the 'glass' of the gospel, shining from Jesus Christ brought to the faith-full human person by the immediate work of the Holy Spirit. Goodwin wants to push the intimacy of the believer with the Persons of the Trinity as far as he possibly can, but he explicitly draws the line at any kind of deification, any kind of merging into the divine Being.

The Persons of the Trinity mediate God to the human person. No other person is to take the place of the divine Persons in this work. Just as I must, inevitably, mediate myself to another person, so God, in the infinitely richer perichoretic Being of the Persons of the Godhead, mediates Himself in meaningful words and actions to a human person. Beginning with the immediate work of the Spirit, initially in regeneration, one is introduced to the Mediator of the Father whom no-one has ever seen.

The immediate mediation of the Spirit leads on to the mediated immediacy of Jesus Christ the Mediator, reflected and subsisting by faith in the regenerate human.

Conclusion: The accusation that immediacy inevitably leads to a denial of the Trinitarian work of God, or that it leads to a Spirit-centrism displacing Christ as the centre, will not hold up in the Pneumatology of Thomas Goodwin. The Spirit's immediate work upon the human person ("immediate" in sense 6) is the very basis for the Christocentrism of his theology, because only then can a mediated immediate experience of Jesus Christ be known ("immediate" in sense 2).

This immediacy does not undermine the Church community in that the shared experience of God by the Spirit brings Christians together. The Spirit's immediate work in the Christian does not lead to solipsism or isolation, because it is in and through the means of grace that the Spirit Himself comes upon the Christian community. Goodwin, in volume 11, argues that the most intense experiences of the Spirit take place in the gathered community through Word and Sacrament. In this sense then we could talk of the mediated

immediacy of the Spirit as well as Jesus Christ. We are, thus left with a chain of mediated immediacy beginning with the means of grace in the Church community and ending with the bold confidence in the Most Holy Place before the Abba-Father in the Beloved. But the chain must also, and perhaps primarily, be considered the other way round. The Father is mediated by the Son (and is known immediately in the Son), the Son is mediated by the Spirit (and is known immediately by the Spirit), the Spirit is mediated through the Word and Sacraments (and is known immediately in and through the Word and Sacraments).

Having <sup>ed</sup>examining the Spirit's work in Goodwin's epistemology we are now well-placed to survey the work of the Spirit in his soteriology, in which we will see several epistemological themes picked up and developed under the new heading.



## Chapter 3

### Pneumatology and Soteriology in Goodwin

#### 1. The Problem facing Soteriology

An Unregenerate Man's Guiltiness before God in Respect of Sin and Punishment. That is the title of Volume 10 of the Works of Goodwin, and provides a fitting starting point for Goodwin's soteriology: a statement of the task facing soteriology.

He begins with a description of the sinfulness of all humanity in respect of being born of or into the sinful humanity of Adam in terms of guilt understood as both action and being.

Book I is given over to the consideration of the imputation of that act of sin by which Adam gave sin entrance to humanity.

As the gospel writers told the biography of Jesus without providing a theological explanation of what happened (leaving that task to the apostles), so Moses in the early chapters of Genesis "tells the history of Adam's fall, and Paul explains the mystery and consequence thereof".<sup>260</sup>

Death is the common experience of all human beings every where, ever since Adam. Death reigns.

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<sup>260</sup> Vol. 10, p.4

Doubtless it is a matter worth the knowing, and our most diligent inquiry, how this deluge of sin and death entered in upon all the world, what was the first gap, the first breach made, that let it in;..... Solomon, the wisest man that ever was, thought this very point (namely, how all men came thus universally corrupt)... Eccles. vii. ver.27, 'And this I found,' says he, 'God made man (originally ) righteous; but now they are all corrupt, and have found out many inventions'.<sup>261</sup>

Goodwin uses Romans 5:12-14 to draw out all the theological foundations of this situation. The one sin of that one man (Adam) has brought death and sin to all humanity without exception. How has this corruption, death and sin come to spread to all other humans? Goodwin says that there are only two ways for sin to pass onto another person: "the one is by way of example, as Jeroboam is said to have caused Israel to sin, and as Eve caused Adam; or else *participatione culpae*, by partaking of the sin of another".<sup>262</sup> It cannot be by example that Paul means, because then it would be Eve and Satan who would be listed as the true source of human sin. It is by propagation, natural generation that sin has spread to the whole human race. Goodwin draws our attention to Psalm 51:5 as a proof of this: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me". Christ is also said to affirm this in John 3:6, when He says that whatever is born of flesh is flesh, and Paul in Eph. 2:3 when he says that we are all the children of wrath by nature.

By *nature*, is there in part meant the natural course of propagating our nature, namely, generation, and conception, and propagation natural; and so Aristotle useth the word *fusis*.<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Vol. 10, p.6

<sup>262</sup> Vol. 10, p.9

<sup>263</sup> Vol. 10, p.10

God is only angry with us for sin, and if He is angry because of our natural birth, then it means that natural conception is the way of conveying sin. That is why Jesus had to be born of the virgin Mary, by the Holy Spirit.<sup>264</sup>

The sin that passes to all humans is not mere corruption, nor mere guilt, but both, that is, the guilt of an act done, and an inherent corruption in the heart as a result of that guilt.

Adam sinning, there were two things befell him: 1, an ever lasting guilt of that act committed, binding him over to death; 2, a forfeiture of the Holy Ghost in him, and so of the image of God in holiness, and so by consequence the contrary depravation of his nature.<sup>265</sup>

Both of these are transmitted to his offspring. All human beings from Adam are held to be guilty, not just in a general and ill-defined way, but guilty of that specific act performed by Adam in the Garden "as truly as if we had had a hand in it".<sup>266</sup> This guilt is the reason why we suffer death, and why we all have morally, spiritually corrupt natures, for "it could not have been inflicted on our natures as a sin, unless we had first been guilty of that act of sin itself".

Examining Romans 5:12, Goodwin notes that Paul states that all have sinned in Adam, showing the specific guilt of all in that first human sin.

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<sup>264</sup> Vol. 10, p.10

<sup>265</sup> Vol. 10, p.11

<sup>266</sup> For seven years Goodwin felt a terrible awareness of his own sinful nature. During this time he had a powerful realization of his own involvement in the sin of Adam. He writes (see Vol. 2, p.lvii) of how he took upon himself, quite self-consciously before God, the guilt of that sin, "as truly as any of my own actual sins".

Children have not yet sinned "after the similitude of Adam's transgression", yet they suffer death, which presupposes guilt, and therefore they must be held guilty of Adam's sin.

Eve is not the root of sin, because it was Adam who had been constituted a "public person", representing the whole of humanity in himself. God did this by His own authority, with the imputation of Christ's righteousness in view. But also, this was the way he wished to govern the world of nature.

God had, as author of nature, made this the law of nature, that man should beget in his own image or likeness... So, then, in this first man the whole nature of man being repositied, as a common receptacle or cistern of it, from whence it was to flow to others, therefore what befalls this nature in him by any action of his, that nature is so to be propagated from him, God's ordinance in the law of nature being, that all should be made of one blood, which could not have been said of any other man than of him.<sup>267</sup>

As head and father of humanity, he represented and acted for all humanity. His will was *voluntas totius generis humani*. As the buds or branches of a plant all come from the root, sharing the life of the root, so is the human race to Adam. If the root is healthy, then all the branches will be, but if it is diseased then so will the whole plant. Thus, Goodwin finds it significant that Gen. 5:3 states that Adam's son was in his own likeness. Adam propagated his sin as *genus communicat totam naturam cuili bet speciei*.<sup>268</sup> Goodwin devotes some time to showing the fairness of God's way of dealing with humanity in this way.

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<sup>267</sup> Vol. 10, p.19

<sup>268</sup> That is, the general nature communicates its nature to all the kinds under it.

It is not just guilt in a merely legal sense that is communicated to all natural humanity, but the corruption of human nature that goes with it. The legal and the ontological are equally vital for Goodwin, who (as will be shown) grounds his soteriology firmly in the ontological.

[W]e are arrested not only as guilty of that first cursed act which he [Adam] personally performed, and so in regard of it are termed sinners, and exposed liable to God's wrath, but also guilty of an universal, total, sinful defilement, spread over all faculties of soul and body, containing in it a privation or want of all good, and an inclination to all evil..., which is traduced unto us by birth and fleshly generation.<sup>269</sup>

Goodwin lists all his opponents in taking this strong Augustinian view of original sin: Pelagius, Pighius ("and some few schoolmen" who do not acknowledge traduced corruption of nature), the papists (who confine the corruption to the absence of original righteousness), and any who keep some faculties of the soul free from corruption. Countering all these views, one by one, Goodwin argues.<sup>270</sup>

1. Humans receive something more than simply the guilt of Adam's sin, something that is named *flesh*.
2. This *flesh* is a corruption of human nature.
3. This corrupt nature is properly seen as a sin.
4. It has a positive love of evil, and not just a lack of good.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Vol. 10, p.41

<sup>270</sup> Vol. 10, p.42

<sup>271</sup> A group of Puritans, possibly all finding a kind of "father" in Richard Sibbes, wage a strong protest against the notion of the Fall as merely a privation of righteousness. Sibbes and Goodwin in England, and John Cotton in America, throw heavy emphasis on the Fall as being a definite orientation of humanity away from God, a rebellion against God, a hatred of good and an allegiance to evil. It is for these reasons that the notion of *habitus* does not

5. It is in every aspect or faculty of the human person, soul and body.

The key point here is that the possession of such a nature is regarded as a sin by God:

what is meant by *flesh* in John iii. 6 is not only a corruption, but such a corruption as properly is a sin, which God looks upon as sinful, and which makes him therefore to hate and loathe us for it..... [T]here is a rotten generation of divines, sprung up in this age, which do flatly deny original corruption to be a sin. Acknowledge they do a guilt of Adam's sin, and a corruption thence derived; but that corruption, they say, is only to be considered as the punishment of the first sin, but in itself not properly a sin; *malum triste* indeed, but not *malum culpae*: our misery, but not our fault.<sup>272</sup>

Whatever is against God's law and grace must be a sin, and corrupt human nature is explicitly stated to be against such (Gal. 5:17; Rom 7:23]. Goodwin shows that the law of God requires and commands every human nature to actually be holy, as His nature is holy: Lev. 11:44, 45. "Mark it, if nature be not wholly sanctified, it is *malum culpae*, a thing blameworthy, and therefore a sin".<sup>273</sup>

Goodwin, at great length and very carefully, maps out the precise depths and extent of this corruption, sin and blameworthiness in human nature, but that is not our central concern here.

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find a place in their theology. The old nature must be replaced by a completely new nature, or rather it must be re-created into a new nature, not simply "enabled" with the addition of righteous *habitus*.

<sup>272</sup> Vol. 10, p.55

<sup>273</sup> Vol. 10, p.58

Nevertheless, what emerges in Goodwin is something which I can only describe as a juridical ontology. This will become clear as we see how his doctrine of justification works, but especially how we see the work of the Spirit in this justifying work. Goodwin has the ontological categories that play such a central role in Eastern theology, yet he integrates these into the Western juridical theology. As one reads through the Mediaeval Scholastics and sees the satisfaction theory of the atonement evolve, one finds a gaping hole where ontology should be. By this I mean there is no ontology in the Eastern sense, that is, justification is seen as the reception of infused righteousness into a sinful being - the question of the ontology of that sinful being is not addressed. Goodwin has drunk deep of the Early Church Fathers and his soteriology is heavily dependent upon recapitulation as the key to understanding the Person and Work of Christ. By joining this up with the developed juridical atonement theology of the Anselmic-Reformation tradition he ends up with what can only be described as juridical ontology, that is, the categories of righteousness and sin apply to ontological foundations, which can be defined as being-in-Christ or being-in-Adam. Augustine's anthropology is founded upon the principle that sin is to be seen in terms of act, that is, of a voluntary act of will, either the original one of Adam or the individual ones resulting from a will given over to sin in each subsequent human. Thus, the remedy for this is remission of sin. In the Eastern tradition it is human being, not act, that is the fundamental problem: the Fall can be portrayed as the inevitable revelation of the weaknesses of human createdness. Fallenness means that humanity is involved in a being that is full of alienation, suffering, pain and evil. The remedy for this conception of anthropology is *theosis*. The theologian of the Patristic period who is most like Goodwin is Irenaeus, with his theology of recapitulation. Goodwin too places the Work of Christ in the Person of Christ as the God-Man, seeing Christ take up into himself all of fallen human life, and not simply restoring it, but going beyond the Edenic state. Like Irenaeus,

Goodwin sees the first Adam as the earthly man, the living soul, who is in some sense preparatory to the Second Adam, the life-giving Spirit. Adam represented nature enjoyed in the holiness of God's presence by the indwelling Spirit, but Christ is spiritual, upon whom the Spirit rests. He has won authority to give the Person of the Spirit, who has all the treasures of life, to His Body, to those who are united to Him, cleansed from their sin, receiving His righteousness by imputation and sharing His holy nature by regeneration.

## 2. Goodwin's Soteriology

Goodwin's soteriology is bound up both with the judicial categories of guilt and righteousness, but also with the ontological categories of new creation and life. Because of this the Person and Work of the Spirit occupy a central place in his soteriology, rather than being tagged on amongst Church government and Heaven. Without the regenerating, life-giving power of the Spirit there is no justification of the sinner at all. The sin of Adam's action and the sin of Adam's nature both so massively condemn fallen humanity under the anger and loathing of God, that nothing less than an holistic all-encompassing Work of the Spirit can make the Work of Christ effectual to save.

Just as Irenaeus gave full emphasis to the physical consequences of sin, so Goodwin thoroughly examines human life under the conditions of fallenness. He bitterly laments the cruelty of death, whose reign is so absolute and tyrannical. But, also with Irenaeus, Goodwin is well aware of the consequences of sin upon human nature itself. This is why in both Irenaeus and Goodwin it is not simply the death of Christ on the cross which saves us, but the whole of his life from incarnation right through to ascension. It is fascinating to see that both theologians spend time noting the saving



significance of the events surrounding the death itself, and both map out the fundamental character of his obedient life.

Trevor Hart, whilst interacting with Gustaf Aulen on the issue of Irenaeus' view of atonement, says:

[I]t is not merely the consequences of human sinfulness (whether those be physical or ethical) that are dealt with in the saving economy, but rather that sinfulness itself, as it is undone in the recapitulatory ministry of Jesus; obedience replacing disobedience; victory replacing defeat; freedom replacing bondage... Subsequently a new humanity emerges in the person of Christ to replace the old, a humanity characterized by the possession of freedom from the determinancy of evil. Sin, and not just guilt is destroyed through the obedience of the Saviour.<sup>274</sup>

This description of Irenaeus' scheme bears striking resemblance to Goodwin's soteriological scheme. Therefore, we must turn our attention to Goodwin's account of justification, because it is here that the full implications of the Spirit's Person and Work in soteriology come to light.

### 3. Justification

Crucial to Goodwin's doctrine of justification is his conviction that Jesus Christ was justified at His resurrection. His theological decisions about this lead inevitably to the conclusions about the decisive work of the Spirit.

Romans 8:34: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again."

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<sup>274</sup> Christ in Our Place: Essays presented to James Torrance, edited by Trevor Hart and Daniel Thimell. (Exeter, 1989)

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That verse becomes a mine of theological truth in Goodwin's hands.

There must therefore be some special thing in the resurrection of Christ, which it contributes to our faith and justification, for which it should have a rather put upon it, and that comparatively to his death.<sup>275</sup>

Goodwin first of all shows that the resurrection provides certain evidence that the debt due upon our sins had been paid, just as the release of a debtor from prison shows that he has paid off his debts. However, this is not where Goodwin's real interest lies. Of course, the evidential nature of the resurrection has been the standard explanation of Rom 4:25<sup>276</sup> for hundreds of years, but Goodwin is not satisfied.

But surely this is not all, that it should argue our justification by way of evidence. This alone would not have deserved a rather to be put upon it, if Christ's resurrection had not some farther real causal influence into justification itself.<sup>277</sup>

Goodwin shows that Christ's life of obedience, His death and passion (including the period of being buried, that is, lying in the grip of death) formed the *materiale* of justification, yet it is the act of pronouncing righteous that constitutes the resurrection, that forms the *formale* of justification. It is at the resurrection that sins are formerly acquitted, although it is the antecedent activity of Christ that pays them off.

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<sup>275</sup> Vol. 4, p.25

<sup>276</sup> "who was delivered for our offences and raised for our justification"

<sup>277</sup> Vol. 4, p.26

Goodwin returns to his favourite Christological model, Christ as the Second Adam, to shed light on this. Going to 1 Cor. 15:47, he observes that Paul describes Adam as the first man, and Christ as the second man, "as if there had never been any more men in the world, nor were ever to be for time to come, except these two".<sup>278</sup> Adam is the 'earthly man' and all those included in him, all those produced from him, are given the same title. Christ is the 'heavenly man' and all who are His receive the same title. Goodwin makes much of the fact that Paul regards the whole of humanity as if there were just two individual men, standing for all the rest.

Thus when Christ died, he died as a common person, and God reckoneth that we died also. When Christ arose, he rose as our head, and as a common person, and so God accounts that we also rose with him. And by virtue of that communion which we had with him in all those actions of his, it is, that now we are born again, we do all rise both from the guilt of sin and from the power of it: even as by virtue of the like communion we had with Adam, we come to be made sinful, when we begin first to exist as men, and to be first born.<sup>279</sup>

Notice that it is both the guilt and power of sin that are broken by communion in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that is to say, the debt is cancelled (remission of sins) and the powers of enslavement that sin possesses over all of those in Adam are broken with the new human being that is in Christ.

The 'it is finished' of Christ refers to His bearing the outpoured wrath and loathing of God for sin, but it does not yet refer to justification, the establishment of a new righteous being before God. The resurrection is the

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<sup>278</sup> Vol. 4, p.31

<sup>279</sup> Vol. 4, p.33

declaration of Christ to be righteous, discharged from judgement. There must be a moment when that passing over from judgement to justification occurs and it must be at His resurrection.

Now in reason when should this acquittance or justification from our sins be first given to Christ, and legally pronounced on him, but when he had paid the last farthing of the debt, and made his satisfaction complete? Which was then done when he began to rise; for his lying in the grave was a part of his humiliation, and so of his satisfaction, as generally orthodox divines hold.<sup>280</sup>

God was manifested in the flesh in order to condemn sin in the flesh, so that the God-man could also be justified in the Spirit from all those sins. Peter (I Pet. 3:18) says, "being put to death in the flesh and quickened in the Spirit", whereas Paul expresses the same idea by describing Jesus as being 'justified in the Spirit'. Therefore Goodwin concludes that the resurrection must be the justification of Christ.

In Volume 5 of his works, Goodwin has a lengthy and detailed treatise on "Christ our Mediator", in which he carefully traces out the Person and Work of Christ. From Chapter 19 he spells out Christ as the fullness for our justification.

Goodwin begins by relating justification to the fulfilment of all that the law requires of humanity. By 'the law' here, although he sometimes uses the term to mean something as narrow and confined as the 10 Commandments, yet Goodwin more often opens it up to its normal New Testament usage, meaning the Mosaic Law, but at times he puts it at its highest and widest setting when he equates it with the character and mind of God with respect to

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<sup>280</sup> Vol. 4, p.36

humanity. It is quite vital that this point be established, because one's theory of justification is in large part determined by the legal standard at which one feels that justification or legal approval is needed. If only the 10 Commandments are in view then justification will be basically a straightforward moral behavioural matter. Once the Mosaic law proper is allowed to be the court of judgement then the matter becomes more holistic and "practical", in that the Mosaic law addresses the human person in every area of life. However, if 'the law' is allowed to mean the heart and mind of God for humanity as a whole then the highest, most far-reaching standards of all come into view, examining every facet of life in intimate detail, cutting open the bare actions to get at the attitudes and motives that lie within, and so on. By giving the concept of law such a rich and all-embracing meaning, Goodwin is able to take justification in a similarly large, holistic sense. Too often the Puritans had a tendency to reduce "God's rule of life" to the 10 Commandments, and from this very pithy and negative summary of certain aspects of the Mosaic Law, they would attempt to extrapolate out guidance for all the multifarious situations of life. By resisting this trend Goodwin is able to achieve a much better view of justification that embraces the Work of the Spirit as well as Christ, and sets the tone for life as being "Life in the Spirit" rather than a forced exposition of the Decalogue.

Thus, the fulfilment of the law by Christ is more than simply living a life void of offences against the 10 Commandments. It is performing "all righteousness for our justification".

Goodwin makes the proposition that the whole righteousness which is in Christ is imputed to us for righteousness. He begins by excluding 4 understandings of Christ's righteousness:

1. When I say, *the whole righteousness which is in Christ*, I do not understand that essential holiness of the divine nature which is in Christ, who is God; for I perfectly reject and abhor the dream of Osiander.... [T]hat righteousness which is of God is not ours.<sup>281</sup> / *him'*

2. Nor is the righteousness that belongs uniquely to the office of the Mediator given to Christians.

3. The righteousness of the glorified Christ in heaven is not imputed to Christians, but the righteousness which he "performed.. in his estate of humiliation on earth".

4. The miracles and extraordinary works He accomplished are not to be seen as imputed to us.

Now to give the right state of the controversy: Protestant divines asserted against the papists, that all our righteousness, by which we are justified, is the imputed righteousness of Christ; but what is in question among divines of the reformed religion is, whether the whole righteousness of Christ be imputed.<sup>282</sup>

The issue here seems innocuous or inconsequential, until Goodwin spells out what he has in mind.

There is a twofold obedience visible in Christ in his human state: one, which consists in the conformity of his life to the law; the other, in undergoing death, and the curse of the law: which the first is called in the schools active, and the other passive obedience. To which may and ought to be added, the holiness of his nature, which is the principle of both the former obediences [emphasis mine].... There are some who not only

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281 Vol. 5, p.338

282 Vol. 5, p.339

exclude that sanctity of his nature, but all the active righteousness of his life.<sup>283</sup>

Goodwin attacks the notion of the sole efficacy of the passive obedience of Christ, by showing that the law does not only demand payment for the infringements of it that have occurred, but the law also demands obedience to it for all the future.

[T]he mind of the lawgiver, which is indeed the law, primarily, absolutely, and *per se*, requires obedience by the precepts, but it threatens and exacts punishment as it were secondarily, and *per accidens*.<sup>284</sup>

During the state of innocence the law only required the active obedience of human beings, but now under the conditions of fallenness it also demands passive obedience, that is, the punishment of death and hell. Christ's passive obedience will not be enough unless preceded with a life of active obedience, and the active obedience would not suffice if not followed by the death and suffering of Christ.

But on top of this passive righteousness, there is the further need of divine favour. It was not enough for Absalom to be simply restored by David at a distance. Absalom needed to see his father's face, that is, to be received into the same favour and friendship that he had previously enjoyed.

Therefore over and above the man's absolution, there is some other thing to be added, viz., the imputation of righteousness; to which is annexed, acceptance to life, of which the apostle speaks distinctly, Rom. v. 19, when he affirms the obedience of

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<sup>283</sup> Vol. 5, p.339

<sup>284</sup> Vol. 5, p.340

one man to constitute many righteous; which in the preceding verse he had called justification of life, or to eternal life; which contains in itself two parts of righteousness, as the law requires, viz., a habitual holiness of nature, and active righteousness of life.<sup>285</sup>

As many aspects of righteousness that are required by the law from human beings, so many aspects of righteousness must we receive from Christ, including a righteousness of nature. By the sanctification of his nature he condemned sin in the flesh, according to Goodwin's interpretation of Rom. 8:3. This new, spiritual nature stands in opposition to the law of sin and death, as a inward law and principle of life according to the Spirit. This new nature comes upon us so that (v4) "the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us":

that is, that the absolute, complete and universal conformity and satisfaction of the law, in suffering the punishment and death, or obedience of life, and holiness of nature, required of sinners, being found in Christ, and communicated to us by imputation, is said to be fulfilled in us, as if we had accomplished it.<sup>286</sup>

To explain his meaning here Goodwin spends a chapter noting the contextual significance and meaning of Rom. 8:1-4. It is crucial to him that these verses follow on from the protracted argument about obedience to the law in chapter 7. Goodwin reads chapter 7 as the experience of a regenerate person undergoing the worst possible case in which they are producing no spiritual fruit at all, and are following only the lusts of the flesh. Paul, he says, is trying to show that justification is built upon no meritorious actions in the

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<sup>285</sup> Vol. 5, p.343

<sup>286</sup> Vol. 5, p.347



sinner at all, and that the Christian does not have to maintain some kind of holy life for the status of justification to remain.

The Christian's being-in-Christ is the true and original ground why there is no condemnation against them.

A law has the power to justify or condemn; and this law, being in Christ, has power and authority to free us, by virtue of our union with him. And if you would know what is the reason that there is no condemnation to those in Christ, notwithstanding all the remaining corruptions that are in them, it is because there is such a perfect holiness in Christ, which being mine by my union with him, frees me from the law and power of sin and death.<sup>287</sup>

It is through our union with Christ, and the perfect holiness of his nature, that we receive all the benefits of the covenant of grace. It is not that regeneration gives a right to those things, but that union with Christ brings justification. Given that justification presupposes holiness of nature, then union with Christ brings regeneration, remission of sin and imputation of righteousness.

Taking the very serious view of original sin in Adam that Goodwin does, he cannot talk of justification being pronounced upon us until that issue is dealt with. Therefore he is able to say: "The holiness that is in Christ's nature takes away the condemning power of original corruption". The law makes the accusation of Adam's sin against every natural human being, therefore Christ destroys this naturally received, guilty humanity by bringing into existence a sanctified humanity, prepared by the Holy Spirit, at his incarnation. This theological move, made also by Irenaeus, means that Goodwin will talk about

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<sup>287</sup> Vol. 5, p.350-351

Christ taking an unfallen humanity, like that of Adam, in which to redeem humanity.

Goodwin, very deliberately, states that there are three aspects to justification:

1. The taking away of actual sin. this is achieved by the passive obedience of Christ, in that his sufferings and death pay for the debt incurred by the guilt of human sin.
2. The need for an actual righteousness. The active obedience of Christ is said to have made many righteous. "Justification lies not only in the pardon of sin, but in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and imputed to us as Adam's sin was. (Rom. v. 18)."

But the law is not fulfilled yet; for we have corruption of nature in us... Third, Christ came into the world in our nature, and fulfilled the righteousness of the law, in having that nature perfectly holy.<sup>288</sup>

Here is the decisive moment in Goodwin's scheme of justification. Traditionally, and certainly in the West since Anselm, justification from sin was worked out in terms of a moral law with reference only to human acting. This is why the notion of *habitus* was considered to be a satisfactory answer to the problem of fallen human living. The concept of sinful states of being was neglected, although it could be argued that it is one of the fundamental motifs in the Old Testament narratives. We need only remember how people and objects could become unholy, unclean and subject to divine anger for certain 'states of being' determined by the Mosaic Law, in order to appreciate the ontological character of sin.

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<sup>288</sup> Vol. 5, p.352

It is not too much to say that Goodwin sees the fallen human condition as being against the law of God and therefore properly sinful. It is illegal to be what we are as sinners: our being has become corrupted, ruined, orientated to selfishness, to self-<sup>^</sup>deification, such that in an almost unconscious way fallen human life and culture is directed upon itself, in self-fulfilling goals, not finding its object, its *raison d'être* in the Creator Trinity.

Thus, justification can take place only in the context of a new humanity coming into being. God wants more than legal satisfaction. He wants redeemed human beings who are acceptable on all points. This is why justification is only complete and real in the resurrection of Christ, when the debt is paid, the obedience has been performed in every way, and when the humanity that walks in newness of life is revealed and pronounced right before God.

[B]ecause his resurrection was the first moment of this his justification from our sins, therefore it is that God calls it his first begetting of Christ, 'This day have I begotten thee', speaking manifestly of his resurrection, Acts xiii. 33. And the reason of his so calling it, is, because all the while before he was covered with sin, and 'the likeness of sinful flesh'; but now, having flung it off, he appears like God's Son indeed, as if newly begotten. And thus there cometh to be the fuller conformity between Christ's justification and ours. For as our justification is at our first being born again, so was Christ's also at his first glorious begetting. And as at our conversion (which is to us a resurrection) we 'pass from death to life', that is, from an estate of death and condemnation, unto justification of life, so did Christ also at his resurrection, which to him was a re-begetting, pass from an estate of death and guilt laid on him, to an estate of life and glory, and justification from guilt.<sup>289</sup>

To conclude our survey of Goodwin's doctrine of justification we must simply note that by making justification depend upon three things (payment for sin, imputation of righteousness, and a resurrection/new birth to Christ's holy, resurrected nature) Goodwin has significantly changed the way the doctrine works. In Calvin justification and regeneration are distinct, but equally necessary and simultaneous results of union with Christ. One is not dependent on the other, because each addresses different aspects of the human problem. However, Goodwin argues that both are needed to deal with the same problem of God's condemning judgement upon fallen humanity.

Christ represents the accomplished, objective work of redemption, but the Spirit actualizes that accomplished work in human beings living in a fallen world. Because Goodwin can talk about a righteous being-in-the-world by participation in the justified resurrection of Jesus Christ, then he can show the work of the Spirit in salvation to be more concrete and vital.

That brings us to focus specifically on the work of the Spirit in Goodwin's soteriology.

#### 4. The Saving Work of the Spirit

Goodwin defines the Spirit as the Creator of the new creation, that is, just as Christ the Word was the one of whom it could be said that 'without him there was not anything made that was made' concerning the old creation, so the same thing can be said of the Spirit of the new creation.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> See Vol. 6, p.17

The primary work of the Spirit is regeneration. Of course, having seen Goodwin's understanding of justification we can see that this must be the case. If regeneration is necessary for justification, then a crucial shift has happened regarding the work of the Spirit. Justification is traditionally (in Protestant theology) seen as an objective, finished act that requires no subjective completion, only subjective imputation by an act of faith, which is the work of the Spirit. In that traditional scheme the Spirit merely awakens faith in the finished work of Christ. However, for Goodwin justification is not a reality for the believer until the Spirit works regeneration in them. A person's justification is partly dependent upon the subjective, absolute ontological change wrought by the Spirit in bringing the believer into vital union with the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Regeneration is not the infusion of Christ's righteousness into the old humanity in the form of *habitus*, but the re-creation of a new human being - the 'alien', righteous, being of Christ.

In James Buchanan's classic summary of the Westminster understanding of justification<sup>291</sup>, he devotes Proposition 34 to the relationship between regeneration and justification: "Regeneration and Justification are simultaneous; and no man is justified who is not renewed, nor is any man renewed who is not also, and immediately, justified". This statement, although superficially like Goodwin, is actually quite unlike him. It takes the view that justification and regeneration are quite distinct, logically unconnected events, which are the two necessary results of being brought into union with Christ. A person cannot have one without the other, but they are not dependent upon one another in any way. This is shown when Buchanan says:

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<sup>291</sup> J. Buchanan, Justification, (Edinburgh, 1991), pp.400ff.

We are united to Him as our federal, or representative Head, and are thus made partakers of His justifying righteousness, - and we are united to Him, at one and the same time, as our spiritual, or life-giving, Head, and are thus made partakers of His sanctifying grace.<sup>292</sup>

Justification is to do with righteousness, whereas regeneration is to do with sanctification under this Westminster scheme. Goodwin does not make that strict division. Regeneration, as the primary work of the Spirit, is one of the three vital aspects of justification, but it is also the fount from which sanctification will flow. Regeneration has the dual function.

So, what precisely does Goodwin have in mind when he speaks of regeneration? If it is the chief work of the Spirit in salvation, then we must carefully investigate Goodwin at this point.

## 5. Regeneration: the Primary Work of the Spirit

Regeneration is our reconciliation to God, which is the other side of Christ's reconciliation of God to us. Goodwin spends a whole book of Volume 6 showing the absolute necessity of regeneration for salvation to happen at all.<sup>293</sup> God must be both just and holy in saving humanity. His justice is satisfied in the sacrifice of His Son, yet holiness must be provided to vindicate His honour. God cannot justify the unholy, nor can He be on friendly terms with those whose very being is against Him.

Christ would rather lose all he hath on his part done or suffered for us, than that we should be saved without being reconciled to

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid. p.400

<sup>293</sup> Vol. 6, pp.117-150

God by a true work of regeneration.... Christ on his part resolved and agreed to see those he would save, to become 'his seed', and to be born of him, or he would never have been satisfied: Isa. liii., 'He shall see his seed, and be satisfied'.<sup>294</sup>

Reconciliation between humanity and God cannot come about until friendship, true communion of persons, can come about. This cannot be secured without a change of nature in fallen humanity, therefore reconciliation depends upon this change: "likeness of disposition is the only sure lasting ground and foundation of friendship, and is the soul of it".<sup>295</sup>

Thus, Goodwin is able to make the proposition that there are two states of human existence: the state of nature and the state of grace, and the passage between the two states is the new birth or regeneration.

[T]here are two different states or conditions, which the elect of God, that are saved, pass through, between which regeneration is the pass. 1. The one is their first state in which they were born, a state of bondage to sin, and obnoxious to instant damnation whilst they remain in it.... 2. The other state is of grace and salvation; therefore oppositely to that former state, he says, He hath saved us, justified us, and made us heirs of life..... Hence it follows that the new birth is the transitus, or passage between those two states.<sup>296</sup>

Titus 3 v 4-7 are perhaps the central verses in Goodwin's soteriology: "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our

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<sup>294</sup> Vol. 6, p.120 & 121

<sup>295</sup> Vol. 6, p.131

<sup>296</sup> Vol.6, p.73

Saviour, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

The scheme of salvation in those verses becomes a controlling principle for Goodwin. Picking up the theme of Christ's resurrection being essential to our salvation, Goodwin shows that our new birth springs from that resurrection:

[I]n Christ,.. our Saviour, of all transactions of his for our salvation, his resurrection hath the most eminent influence into our new birth, as the instrumental cause; and for that I must have recourse unto Peter, and fetch it out of him, 'who hath begotten us again by the resurrection of Jesus Christ'.<sup>297</sup>

Continually Goodwin underlines and reinforces his conception of the plight of humanity in sin. His whole motivation for placing such a soteriological premium on regeneration springs from the horror of the sinful state that grips Goodwin's mind. It could never be enough for Goodwin to be merely forgiven for sin (as Piscator and the Arminian theologians), nor could it ever even be enough to have the imputed righteousness of Christ (the Westminster Confession). The state of sin is so serious that it inheres in the very being of the fallen human, such that there can be no righteous standing before God until the question of sinful being is addressed.

*Guilt* of sin is one thing (the best are guilty), but a *state* of sin is a further thing. *Corruption* of nature to be in a man is one thing, the *state* of nature is another: to be *worthy* of death is one thing, so every man in sinning is; but to be in a *state* of death is another; it is to be sentenced and adjudged to die, or as Christ speaks, condemned already.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Vol. 6, p.74

<sup>298</sup> Vol. 6, p.77



Corruption of nature is not merely a consequence of sin, it is sin itself. This is why Goodwin can say that the condition of regeneration "is a perpetual and standing condition of favour, when once we have admission or access into it, which by faith.., and by regeneration here in this text of Titus, we are said to have..... [It is] a state of grace".<sup>299</sup>

Goodwin keeps the state of grace, which is under the Creative power of the Spirit by regeneration, in strict parallel with the state of nature, which is under the power of Satan. To be in the state of nature is to be condemned already, and sinful actions merely increase the condemnation. To be in a state of grace, that is, to have been made alive with Christ through the resurrection, achieved by the Spirit in regeneration, is to be justified, righteous, reconciled to God. Nothing but the regenerating power of the Spirit can save a person from condemnation.<sup>300</sup>

There are two pleas upon which carnal men build the hopes of their salvation, though they go on in the sinfulness of their own hearts, and die without this work wrought in them. 1. They plead God's infinite grace and mercy. Who (say they) shall limit his mercy? 2. They say Christ hath died, and perfectly wrought salvation for them; and they cast themselves upon his death, to be saved by it.<sup>301</sup>

As to the first "carnal" hope, Goodwin points out that God does not save by a mere prerogative act of pardon, but that when he intends to save a

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<sup>299</sup> Vol. 6, p.76

<sup>300</sup> See Vol. 6, p.83

<sup>301</sup> Vol. 6, p.84

person He makes them "a friend and favourite of him, a son and heir, in whom he may delight; therefore together with pardoning him, he also renews him".<sup>302</sup>

But, the more significant, "carнал" hope is trusting in the death of Christ for salvation.

And for Christ's death; even that also will not save thee, without this new begetting; and the text, 1 Pet. 1. 3, will warrant this too. For consider but this, that he rose again to regenerate and beget you again. Therefore says the text, 1 Pet. i. 3, 'Who hath begotten us again by the resurrection of Jesus Christ'. If you will have the benefit of his death, you must find the power and virtue of his resurrection in sanctifying you, as Paul speaks, Phil. iii. 10. 'And you who are dead in sins and trespasses,' must be 'quickened with him', unto a new life of grace, if ever you be saved... And this new birth, or holiness, necessarily accompanies pardon, even as Christ's resurrection followed his death; and his death extends to save no more than his resurrection puts forth a power to beget. As, if Christ had not personally risen, we had been still in our sins, so if Christ be not risen in thee, thou art still in thy sins, and wilt die in them.<sup>303</sup>

It is one thing to make regeneration a necessary accompaniment to justification, as Calvin does, by virtue of our union with Christ, but it is more to make regeneration the way by which we are delivered from our sins. It is quite clear here that Goodwin does not have in mind that division between the power of sin (meaning concupiscence or a bias towards evil in the will), and the guilt of sin (the legal consequences of wrong actions). For Goodwin there is merely sin, that includes guilt and power, and there is no forgiveness of sin, no justification unto life without the power of the resurrection to provide a new, incorruptible human being within the believer.

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302 Vol. 6, p.84

303 Vol. 6, p.84

Goodwin examines the concept of regeneration under two models: new birth and new creation. We will follow his reasoning in this way to get to the bottom of what he intends by regeneration, before testing whether he has not, in fact, inadvertently exchanged the Protestant doctrine of justification for a variation of the Augustine/Tridentine model in his attempt to ground the doctrine in the concrete reality of the historical work of the Spirit in the human heart. We begin then with the concept of new birth.

## 6. Regeneration as New Birth

Goodwin takes 1 Peter 1:3-5 as the primary text for this investigation: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. "

Goodwin sees Peter's argument to be an exhortation to the Jews not to glory in the merely physical benefits of the land inheritance of Abraham, but to glory and rejoice in the spiritual birth that is theirs in Christ. They were begotten of God, of the 'incorruptible seed', and by that birth they had become a 'choice generation'.

It is called 'a being born again' because it conveys the image or likeness of the one who begets.

The first Adam had an image to convey to his seed.... So Christ, the second Adam, hath also an image to convey unto them that

are his, 1 Cor. xv.49: therefore that way of conveying it is called a birth, and he a Father: Col. iii. 10, 'The new man is renewed after the image of him that created him'.<sup>304</sup>

This image not only includes a conformity of will to make the new born child ready to do the will of God, but it also sets the glory of God up as the only true goal of human life.

This is holiness, and it can be no other or further thing, even as in God himself it is not; it being that in him which forms, orders, disposeth, guides, directs, acts all for himself, and swallows up all into himself. Now, in the creature, holiness is the likeness of what is in himself, and so it is a disposition to be for God, even as God is for himself..... To be born again and to become a Christian is to make God's interest my own for ever. It is the fundamental law of regeneration and the first enacted in the heart.<sup>305</sup>

These new dispositions and values are not forced from the outside of the person. That is why it is called a new birth, because it is the beginning of a new nature. What was natural to the person before, is no longer natural, that is, according to their natural instincts and affections. "To have a thing by birth and by nature is all one in phrase of speech".<sup>306</sup> The divine nature that Peter ascribes to the Christian stands for all those holy dispositions formed in the believer by the Holy Spirit, which stand in opposition to the lusts of the flesh which are orientated to selfish and 'worldly' ends.

That is, whereas the natural spirit that is in us puts forth itself in lustings and dispositions to envy, and it doth it naturally, God gives grace or holiness to lust after meekness, humility; and the one, after a man is regenerated, is as natural as the other afore.

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<sup>304</sup> Vol. 6, p.152

<sup>305</sup> Vol. 6, p.152 & 153

<sup>306</sup> Vol. 6, p.153

And accordingly, as the flesh or corrupt nature is said to have its lustings to evil things, so the spirit of regeneration is said to have its answerable lustings to things holy, Gal. v. 17.<sup>307</sup>

This new nature born of God is that which Paul speaks of in I Thess 4:9 when he says that he does not need to write to them, because they are taught of God to love one another. It is the very nature of the new born child of God to express love to the members of the Body of Christ.

Without regeneration God does not bear the relation of Father to us. "God owns no children but such as are like him, and begotten of him after his image".<sup>308</sup> It is by this work of regeneration that the Spirit joins us to Christ as the bride to her husband.<sup>309</sup> Christ loves a beauty as we do, and the Father intends to give Him a beautiful wife. This He secures by regenerating believers with the divine nature. ( - - ?

Heaven is available to the believer only by virtue of regeneration on two counts: firstly, it is an inheritance and inheritances go by birth; secondly, just as the body must be changed before it can be glorified, so the soul must be (more so) "for this glory in heaven is an inheritance undefiled, and no unclean thing can enter in".

As God gave the earth and all things in it unto Adam, and all that should be born of him, so hath he given heaven and all the promises unto Christ, and unto all that should be born of him also.<sup>310</sup>

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307 Vol. 6, p.154

308 Vol. 6, p.155

309 Vol. 6, p.156

310 Vol. 6, p.156

Taking the phrase from John 3:6, that whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit, Goodwin goes into more detail concerning the spiritual nature of this new born nature.

To begin with, he would have us see that this birth is not the communication of the Spirit Himself. Although "he himself is given to us as the author of our regeneration, and though himself dwelleth in us immediately, and not by his graces only..., yet the giving of and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in us, is in no wise to be termed our being born of the Spirit". Goodwin is always nervous of any kind of immanentism that would identify the Spirit with any aspect of createdness, even though that createdness be the new createdness of regenerated believers. Any theologian following Goodwin's principles would find the Pneumatology of a philosopher like Hegel quite impossible. Hegelian Pneumatology destroys the personhood of the Spirit, and it is the Personalness of the Spirit that drives Goodwin's Pneumatology.

Being born of the Spirit describes a work of the Spirit in the Christian, which Goodwin sees as analogous to the conception of the human nature of Christ. This new birth is not the 'begetting' of a nature that is the very same as the nature of the Spirit Himself, that is, it is not a communication of the Godhead to us making us "God of God". Just as the two natures of Christ are not confused or mixed, so the Spirit does not become the new nature. Neither is this new nature a spark of the divine life put within, because we are only creatures and can only ever be creatures.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Goodwin has a tendency to become quite mystical in his descriptions of the close union between the believer and Christ. Yet, as willing as he is to push that line of thinking as far as he can, he draws the line sharply at the Creator/creature distinction.

We were born flesh, and Goodwin takes this first birth of flesh to stand in defining opposition to the second birth which is of the Spirit. Sin did not, and does not, so change human nature that it ceases to be human any longer. Sin is a corruption of human nature, a defilement or depraving. Sin does not form the very substance of human being in its fallenness. Even with his very serious view of human natural sinfulness, Goodwin knows that one cannot ascribe sin to the substance of humanity. In the same way spirit does not define the very substance of humanity in its justified and regenerated state. Reconciled humans are still humans, but the change that has been born in them is analogous to the corruption of the Fall. "And therefore spirit must be understood to be a principle in man's nature, as well as flesh or corruption is".

I give this distinction of it. *Spirit* is all those gracious and heavenly dispositions and habiliments wrought in the whole soul, especially the spirit of the mind, which do elevate and raise it, fit and suit it unto things spiritual as spiritual.... *Spirit*., is the foundation and beginning of all those glorious enjoyments of God in the other world, and shall be raised up thereto.<sup>312</sup>

The unregenerate mind is unable to appreciate spiritual things as spiritual, because it does not possess the correct faculties of apprehension.

What are things spiritual? ...: they are the things of God, which the Spirit reveals, 'the deep things of God'.... They are things of the Spirit... They are another world or system of things, opposed to things of the flesh, which flesh, or corrupt nature, is suited unto.... God himself and Christ are the chiefest spiritual things and blessings... There are things that are spiritual derivatively from God and Christ... All blessings, adoption, forgiveness, redemption, fellowship with God, and heaven itself, are termed spiritual blessings, Eph. i. 3.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> Vol. 6, p.163

<sup>313</sup> Vol. 6, p.165

Being made a new creature is to be seen as running analogously to being born into the old creation. Appetites and senses are given which are appropriate to the world which one is a creature of. Being a creature of the world in its original created state, Adam was given gifts, abilities and aptitudes to appreciate all the marvels and aspects of the world he was 'born' into:

God made and prepared a world consisting of, and filled with, variety of creatures, the making of which cost him six days' work. There were delicacies of fruits for the taste, an entertainment for the eye in all sorts of colours, light, ornaments, and tapestry, which heaven and earth affordeth to this day. There was a brave world, and richly furnished, as the apostle speaks of it, 1 Tim. vi. The angels stood by, and wondered all the while for whom all this should be prepared, for they had not senses to be affected with them. God after all,.. brings in man, and sets Adam down in the centre of this world; and lo, he had at the first of his creation an eye to see and to be taken with all the beauties God had scattered up and down throughout the whole. He had an ear to hear all the music which the melodies of the birds singing, or the murmurings and warblings of rivulets, could afford. He had a taste and belly suited to take pleasure in all these varieties of fruits, or whatever else God had provided as a banquet for him; insomuch as there was not any one thing God had made but he had some sense, inward or outward, to take in a pleasure from it, or some faculty in his mind to close with and make use of it....<sup>314</sup>

Goodwin goes to these lengths to impress upon his reader the conformity between the senses and natural aptitudes of human nature, considered in its widest setting including body and soul, in that first creation, as yet untouched by the corrupting devastation of sin. Goodwin likes to talk of the huge capacity for pleasure that God had invested in humanity, a gift that was soon to become misdirected, running down channels that could not

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<sup>314</sup> Vol. 6, p.166



contain its great power and capacity. This high (and imaginative) doctrine of creation is used to set the background for regeneration as a birth into a new world of senses and aptitudes.

Thus the apostle tells us it falls out in this new creation, God hath been from everlasting contriving and ordaining, and in the fullness of time preparing.... And whenever God regenerateth any man, and constitutes him a new creature, lo, the man hath a new eye to see, an ear to hear, and all sorts of new senses to take in all sorts of spiritual things, as the Spirit shall be pleased to reveal them to him. He no sooner opens an eye but he finds himself to be come into a new world, and to be environed with new objects.<sup>315</sup>

Regeneration is the very definition of the spiritual life. The believer is born into a new world that is the enduring world of the age to come. This spiritual world can only be appreciated for what it is by those who are in it, born into it, equipped for it. To the unregenerate only a vague notional knowledge can be gained, and, Goodwin stresses, their involvement in the activities of the church and Christian life will be motivated by selfish reasons rather than a love for spiritual things in themselves. Only the heart that has been regenerated by the Spirit can be involved in the spiritual world that the Spirit is Lord of. The natural mind cannot accept spiritual things.

Spiritual things may indeed be viewed as wrapt up in worldly conveniences, the avoidance of punishment, or the obtaining something which a man apprehends good to him, which occurs by them or with them. But spiritual things, as spiritual, are the things themselves, which are represented in their own real nature, in their native hue and proper colours to a spiritual man..... [S]piritual things are the proper objects of that true, genuine, heaven-born spirit, begotten by regeneration.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> Vol. 6, p.166

<sup>316</sup> Vol. 6, p.167

Discerning spiritual things cannot be simply performed by the indwelling Spirit: "a man must not simply have the Spirit of God to reveal them objectively, but he must subjectively be made by that Spirit, a spiritual man, and have spiritual senses given him, else, though the Spirit should reveal them, he could not receive them".<sup>317</sup>

## 7. Regeneration as New Creation

Goodwin assumes that under the heading of new birth he has shown that the nature of the regenerate person is spirit as opposed to flesh. So, Goodwin now goes on to show that:

over and above exciting, and moving, and aiding grace unto acts, there are inwrought and infused in the soul at regeneration, inherent and abiding principles of spiritual life, by which the soul is inwardly fitted, capacitated, inclined, and quickened unto the operations of a spiritual life.<sup>318</sup>

Goodwin sees this as the decisive difference between himself and Roman Catholic theology, which sees grace as acting upon the soul only as "exciting and adjuvant" grace, rather than being a new principle of life in the heart. Rejecting also the Arminian opinion that the unregenerate will is stirred up by supernatural enablings, Goodwin strongly opposes any notion that God works spiritual activities in human persons extrinsically, that is, by acting upon them, rather than giving them principles within that cause them to act true to

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<sup>317</sup> Vol. 6, p.168

<sup>318</sup> Vol. 6, p.187

themselves. Goodwin does not wish to allow these principles to become the ground of justification itself however.<sup>319</sup>

We detest that doctrine of infusion of habits for justification, or as a foundation of works, to make them meritorious. But we say they are simply required for man's acting holily, and for the pleasing of God by good works, which good works declare and assert withal that in our regeneration, from the first acts to the last, and so throughout our lives, there are infused supernatural principles of life and grace, which remain and are inherent in us; and so the works thereof, nay, the workings of grace in us, are not merely from excitations of the Holy Spirit in us.<sup>320</sup>

Of course, Goodwin makes much of Eph. 2:10: "We are saved through faith; not of works; for we are his workmanship created unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Given the distinction between the principle that enables acting and the act itself, Goodwin draws the analogy between the powers that lie in us to receive physical information, to do physical acts, and the powers that are given by the Spirit in the regenerate soul that perform similar functions in the spiritual world. These principles must be given because

If the soul were not, by the infusion of this new spiritual quality, elevated and admitted into that order of spiritual agents, having spiritual life, it would want that essential property (in common to

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<sup>319</sup> The righteousness of Christ is always the ground of justification in Goodwin's theology, even when he talks about the righteousness of Christ as forming the new nature of the Christian. He consistently opposes the idea that there could ever be anything in the Christian which considered in itself could be a ground of justification. Even the perfect new nature could not be justified if it was separated from Christ, because it depends upon the Person whose Work has made it possible.

<sup>320</sup> Vol. 6, p.189

all sorts of living agents in their kinds) to act from within itself; but must be acted merely by a principle extrinsecal to itself.<sup>321</sup>

The fact that the Spirit works this new creation presupposes that new principles of life are given suitable to the kind of life into which we are born. All beings are given instincts, capacities and aptitudes suitable to the life they must lead. Goodwin cites Prosper as saying, *Deus possuit in corde fundamentum fidei*.<sup>322</sup>

Goodwin cites Basil as saying that the power of seeing is in the eye, always present but not perpetually operating. This citation is most fascinating, because Goodwin seems to follow Basil not just on this one point cited, but follows his whole argument virtually from start to finish. It often seems as if Goodwin has studied the Church Fathers in great detail, because although he quotes them directly relatively infrequently, his arguments and conclusions seem quite often to be drawn from the Cappadocian well.<sup>323</sup>

Taking the resurrection of the body as a useful parallel to the regeneration of our souls, Goodwin marks out the kind of changes that will come upon the human body at the resurrection to glory.

I would ask what is this new spiritualising of the body, but an endowing it with such new qualities and abilities as shall fit the body unto a spiritual condition and actings? It shall be endowed with such new qualities, namely, as incorruption, glory, agility, &c., and perhaps with new senses, which we cannot not guess at, which are differing from, yet answering unto these natural qualities and powers our bodies now, as natural bodies, have....

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<sup>321</sup> Vol. 6, p.193

<sup>322</sup> Vol. 6, p.193: God puts in a foundation of faith into the heart, and draws forth the act.

<sup>323</sup> cf. Basil in Ch. 26 of *Spiritus Sanctus*

The change then is not barely of new acts, but of new powers and endowments enabling us to act.<sup>324</sup>

'Whoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin because he is born of God'.<sup>325</sup> This being born of God conveys a seed from Him that is incapable of wrong action. It is a new nature full of such holy principles of conduct that there is not the capacity to sin. The Greek seems to suggest, although Goodwin does not note this, that there is no capacity for sinning in the one born of God. This divine seed, this 'suitable nature', cannot act contrary to its own nature and being. Again Goodwin stresses that this divine seed is not the Spirit Himself, because it speaks of a principle of life within that enables natural action.

For we ourselves, being endowed with principles of action, are moved by him; and therefore the actions which we perform, as praying, &c., are not attributed to the Holy Ghost as the subject of them, but only as the efficient. We must not say that they are the Holy Ghost's prayers subjectively, but only efficiently. He makes them in us and for us, and helps our infirmities in praying, Rom. viii.; but that which constitutes in the ranks of spiritual actors in the duty, and the subjects of it, is a principle of a spiritual life inherent and seated in the mind and will, and quickening us therein.<sup>326</sup>

We act because of these new principles infused by regeneration, yet it is He who actuates us through these principles. "So that the holy actions, though the Spirit excites and stirs us up to them, are our own, and we are the intrinsical agent of them, and constituted to be so by virtue of a divine seed, conveyed to us in our spiritual birth".<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Vol. 6, p.194

<sup>325</sup> I John 3:9

<sup>326</sup> Vol. 6, p.196

<sup>327</sup> Vol. 6, p.197

Citing both Augustine and Aquinas, Goodwin marks that this notion of seed means "principle within creatures" that causes them to act "according to their own kind".

It is not the mere preaching of the word or hearing of the word that brings about or accounts for regeneration. The Old Testament prophecies looking forward to the writing of the law in the human heart are all looking forward to this miracle of regeneration when the law word of God would not be merely heard, but would become the very principle of life ruling from within. "Words are transient, and vanish into air; but *littera scripta manet*, what is written abides".<sup>328</sup> It is not that eternal life abides upon the believer, but that eternal life abides in them.

Dionysius has rightly expressed it, Nothing can come to work or act till it hath received a nature and a being as the principle thereof; so nor to act divinely or supernaturally till it hath a being of such a supernatural nature given to it; and this is still the same with the seed of God, and eternal life abiding in us. We have by the new birth a supernatural being, as by the first a natural.<sup>329</sup>

It is this holy nature that denominates the believer holy, not his actions, because then he would only be holy in so far as he was performing a holy action, when the state of the regenerated soul is to be permanently and eternally holy.

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<sup>328</sup> Vol. 6, p.198

<sup>329</sup> Vol. 6, p.199

The corrupt nature is mortified in regeneration, therefore the new nature, with its new principles, is created in the place of "that inherent corruption that was destroyed". The extent of the mortification and the extent of the regeneration must be equal or else there would be aspects of humanity that would remain either unhealed by regeneration, or else made of non-existence by default in that they are not replaced in the new creation. Thus, as humanity under the description of flesh is complete, in that the essential substance of what a human is still forms them, so humanity under the description of spirit is complete, with all the same substantial qualities that form them human.

It is a whole frame of new powers, to enable a man to act that for which good works are ordained.<sup>330</sup>

This holy nature does not fluctuate or vary according to the various life experiences the believer may be exposed to.

[I]f the new creature be truly the image of God's holiness, then there is a permanent holiness of nature, or divine nature, as it is called. For God is first holy in his nature and in himself, and then is holy and righteous in all his ways and works *ad extra*. He is good, and so doth good, Ps.cxix.68.<sup>331</sup>

This of course leads Goodwin to conclude that the habitual power of sin that was the principle of life in the first, fallen creature, is mortified when this new, permanent holy principle of life is created by the Spirit. The subject of

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<sup>330</sup> Vol. 6, p.202

<sup>331</sup> Vol. 6, p.202

thinking and acting is the same both before and after regeneration, but the principles by which that life is carried out are quite different.

For the understanding is one and the same understanding faculty, and so is the subject of that spiritual act, after regeneration, that it was afore; and it is the same understanding that understood other things afore that doth now understand other things beside spiritual things after regeneration. But by analogy it is affirmed to be a new power and a new understanding, in this respect, because the soul, which has but one and the same faculty of understanding, must be enlivened with this grace as another life to it, ere it can spiritually understand. That grace puts a new ability into the understanding, as necessary as the understanding itself is to understand withal, as all the scriptures shew.<sup>332</sup>

Goodwin rejects "the schoolmen" for having too much confidence in human reason, and all the human faculties, as if they had not been corrupted by sin. They, Goodwin accuses, hold that God must simply act upon the faculties of reason and understanding as if those faculties were quite suited to the issues and objects of the spiritual life and world. Goodwin concedes that the new creature is not an entirely new (*ex nihilo*) human, but insists that the divine seed is engrafted onto the old stock, such that it changes the whole old stock into its own character. Goodwin boils all his arguments down to three principles:

(1.) *Principium quod*, the principle which; that is, which is the seat and subject of all; and that is the soul, and its natural faculties, as they have a natural life in them.

(2.) There is *principium quo*, the principle of life by which the soul acts, and from which, as it acts spiritually, it hath a spiritual life; and that, say we, is grace infused, which is termed eternal life in a man.



(3.) There is God, who is the fountain and efficient cause and worker both of that principle of life in the soul, and then of all the acts from it, by his motions, influences, and helps, and elevations, and raisings up of that life to act according to its kind; which actings, notwithstanding this infused life in us, do depend upon God's power to work them in us, as much as the infusion of life itself doth.<sup>333</sup>

Thus, the Spirit is the author of the new principles of the new nature, and also of the efficient power that enables the new nature to act according to its own principles. He is the One in whom we live and move and have our being, in the spiritual realm as much as in the realm of the flesh.

The Holy Ghost is the extrinsecal cause of the operation therefore said to be put; but the new heart is the intrinsecal cause of our doing, though as acted by the Holy Ghost.<sup>334</sup>

The corrupt nature, as it lives on in this period "between the times", cannot corrupt the holy seed that is the new creature. Goodwin uses the language of Romans 7, on many occasions to account for this. 'It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me'. The divine seed, the new principle of life, is the new man, the saved person, and this new human can actually make a distinction between itself and the ongoing life of sin. This must be so, for the divine seed cannot sin (lit. does not have the capacity to sin), therefore sin cannot have issued from the new nature. Just as the corrupt nature does not have the capacity to produce spiritual and holy actions, so the seed of life is unable to produce fleshly actions. The seed remains in the believer, because it is born of God.

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<sup>333</sup> Vol. 6, p.209

<sup>334</sup> Vol. 6, p.212

And what is this thing that does remain, but a seed; and as all must grant, distinct from fruit? Now, every fruit must have a root to grow upon. And therefore, gracious actings proceed from a seed let in by a birth, and that birth is from our being born of God, whose seed it is called. Which fully makes good the assertion, that in regeneration, not merely our actions are altered, but there is a change of heart.<sup>335</sup>

Goodwin draws out the analogy of fruit being produced by a tree, and that tree growing up from its roots. As Jesus had said that a good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit, so a human person will produce the fruit that are of the kind of that person's heart, either flesh or spirit (see Gal. 5). The master-piece or the master copy from which the Holy Spirit re-creates human nature is Jesus Christ. He is the Vine, and the branches that share His same nature produce the same life and fruit that He has. The Father predestined human beings to be conformed to the image of Christ, and this comes about in the absolute change that the Spirit works in the human heart at conversion.

He, having a Son that was the image of himself, resolved that he should take our nature upon him, that he might be therein made like to us, that so, filling his nature with all grace and with all glory, he might conform us again unto the image of that his Son, that we might all be brethren, all alike conformed unto him.<sup>336</sup>

As Christ was condemned so must we be in Him, laying ourselves open to the condemning, convicting power of the Spirit, allowing Him to have full scope against our sin. As Christ was crucified, so also "the Spirit of God in true Christians comes with the power of Christ, naileth his lusts to the cross of

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<sup>335</sup> Vol. 6, p.215

<sup>336</sup> Vol. 6, p.219

Christ". As Christ died on the Cross, so the Spirit takes away the life and power of sin as He baptizes us into the death of Christ. Without the subjective killing of sin in the human person, there can be no forgiveness of sins.<sup>337</sup>

There are three parts to the work of regeneration in the human person:

1. Humiliation for sin, which is necessary for true faith.
2. Faith in Christ for justification.
3. Turning from sin to God, or holiness of heart and life.

God the Holy Ghost, who is to work with and second our sermons, and to deal with men's hearts, hath a peculiar office assigned him, which therefore must needs be necessary, as appears by that title given him, Rom viii. 15, 'the Spirit of bondage'..... As the Spirit hath an office designed him for such a work, so God hath appointed a word in the hand of this Spirit to work and 'engender bondage' by, as the phrase is, Gal. iv. 23, 24.<sup>338</sup>

Goodwin speaks, of course, of the law, which is given to the Spirit to put a sinful human soul into bondage, condemnation and humiliation, by revealing the righteous standard of God (as Goodwin interprets the law to be). In the Puritan tradition, Goodwin describes the work of the law in preparing the sinner for faith in Christ. Like Luther, Goodwin takes the notion of the Law being useful "until the Seed come" to mean that the law is useful in convicting a person until they believe on Christ.

This work of the law by the Holy Spirit is done to wean the sinner off sin, such that they will hunger for God, and be satisfied in nothing except God.

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<sup>337</sup> See Vol. 6, p.230

<sup>338</sup> Vol. 6, p.363

For if this apprehension, that sin is the greatest evil, season but a man's spirit once, it sours all pleasant things with him, they have lost their taste for ever; and nothing can be so good to him as sin is evil, but only God; for nothing is so good as sin is evil, but only he.<sup>339</sup>

Only when the guilt and horror of sin, the sinfulness of sin, is seen can true faith in Christ be exercised. Only a deep conviction of sin by the Spirit, a conviction that causes a complete rejection of the old, fallen humanity, can lay a adequate foundation for the new humanity to come in.<sup>340</sup>

Bring a bell to a founder that hath a crack in it, and he will not go about to solder that up, and so let it go, but dash all in pieces and melt and cast it anew.... A sight of sin is needful, to constrain us to make use of Christ's righteousness, and every part of it, to search thoroughly into it, and every parcel of it, and to see the necessity of all the holiness of his nature, life, &c., that nothing could be spared. Men that are confusedly convinced that they are sinners, their faith is answerably as confused; they believe in Christ as a Saviour, and that is all; but their faith improves [proves?] not his righteousness to the uttermost, nor do they search into the riches of Christ's active and passive obedience, and the holiness of his nature, as necessary to obtain their acceptance with God..... It is necessary that we may not rest in a false sanctification. Men that see but the corruption of their outward actions, content themselves with an outward reformation. But men that see their lusts, rest not ill they be mortified; they bend their force against them. A convinced soul sees his nature corrupted, and the spring of all defiled, he will not rest till he hath a new nature; as the power of corruption he sees lies there, so the power of godliness, he will see, lies in cleansing that fountain.<sup>341</sup>

Thus, Goodwin shows that a thorough conviction of sin, reaching into the human heart, casts the sinner onto Christ, not for mere forgiveness, nor

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339 Vol. 6, p.382

340 See Vol. 6, p.383

341 Vol. 6, p.384

even for an imputed righteousness, but for a righteousness that will even cleanse the source of pollution in the human heart. Goodwin not only defines a clear role for the Spirit in soteriology, but he also keeps the work of the Spirit thoroughly integrated with the work of Christ. It seems that if regeneration is logically removed from justification, then the key issue at the heart of soteriology does not touch the human person in themselves. It is worth quoting a short paragraph from R. C. Moberly's Atonement and Personality, who, although not in agreement with Goodwin's view of the necessity of a punitive atonement for propitiation, nevertheless points out the problems with a purely forensic justification:

All forms of theory which are content to explain the Atonement as a transaction, however pathetic or august in itself, which has its proper completeness altogether outside the personality of the redeemed, are found to be hopelessly inadequate, as well to the truth of theological doctrine, as to the truth of human experience and reason.<sup>342</sup>

If we reduce salvation to a forensic status which is used as a basis for the Holy Spirit to perform the "mopping up" exercise of sanctification, then the work of the Spirit is doomed to be relegated to a kind of stage-hand. However, if the work of the Spirit is defined as, in some sense, the actualization and achievement of the completed work of Christ in the person of the believer, then the Spirit and the Son may be seen more as "the two hands" of the Father grasping fallen humanity.

God created humanity by an immediate act of creation in the original act of creation, but in the new creation he brings the new humanity into being mediate.

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<sup>342</sup> Moberly, Atonement and Personality, (London, 1904), p.277

Now these patterns or middle instruments, on which God first stamped his holiness are, 1. His word or law evangelized; 2. The man Christ Jesus; and both in this respect are termed *logos*, the word of God: the first bearing a doctrinal image of God's holiness; the other, Christ, being a living, transcendent image of it.<sup>343</sup>

The holiness created in the human heart by regeneration produces a conformity to the laws of God, because it is patterned after Christ who is the living embodiment of those laws. Thus, a regenerate person will find themselves conforming to the law of God before, perhaps, they know what that law is.

For though this holiness be legal, in respect of the materials and pattern of it, the law of God, yet it is not legal in respect of the subject or state of the person that hath it begun, or in respect of the tenure of the covenant, or of the virtue efficient that wrought it. For the person that hath it is the subject of the covenant of grace, belongs to that division and jurisdiction, and hath it wrought in him by virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, though as yet he picks not out in his own discerning that this is the image of Christ in him.<sup>344</sup>

Now, this is the Spirit of the Living God, who is pure and mere act, and his life is holiness and righteousness, and he acts accordingly; and these letters [See 2 Cor. 3:3], therefore, are such dispositions of life (like unto God's) as shall incline the creature, by a vital principle, to act holily. The letters are spirit and life in the soul, and not dead characters as on stone, such as in unregenerate men's minds the law makes.<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> Vol. 6, p.390

<sup>344</sup> Vol. 6, p.391

<sup>345</sup> Vol. 6, p.404

Given that the original image of God upon the human soul was defaced by sin, God "new casts the heart again, using the artifice of the Spirit; and his word is as the instrumental cause or mould, bearing that former image, and fashioning the heart there unto".

Goodwin defines sanctification as the subjective conforming of the human life and mind to that perfect nature of Christ. He distinguishes between sanctification and justification by using Heb x. 14, 16: "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" ; "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them".

So then writing the law in the heart is true and genuine sanctification. It is such that to the persons that have it justification belongeth.<sup>346</sup>

Notice again how Goodwin, even when distinguishing sanctification and justification in this way, makes justification a necessary consequence of having the work of regeneration in the heart. It seems that Goodwin has a kind of two-stage sanctification. When a person is first regenerated they are given that incorruptible seed, that holy nature which cannot sin. This nature has not yet assimilated the entire human person to itself at that initial stage, but still the person is deemed to be holy because they have absolutely passed over from death to life. Because the human nature of Christ is perfected and entirely holy, then the righteousness of that nature is imputed to the believer, even though their full conformity to the image of Christ is not yet completed. As in the New Testament sanctification is past, present and future for the

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<sup>346</sup> Vol. 6, p.402

believer, so in Goodwin's scheme Christians are sanctified now in that they have received the perfect, sin-proof divine nature that cannot ever be implicated in sinful behaviour, yet, they are being sanctified in that this seed of God, implanted and empowered by the Holy Spirit must grow, bringing forth spiritual fruit, conforming the whole person to the image of God as it is found in Christ and the word. But, sanctification is also future, because the body is entirely corruptible and must pass away in death to make way for the incorruptible, glorified body of the Resurrection, the 'regeneration' as Jesus calls the Eschaton in Matthew. Similarly, the remnants of the old humanity must be swallowed up by death, so that the redeemed person may enter heaven in pure holiness of heart.

There are three sorts of works whereby our salvation is completed and accomplished.

1. *Immanent* in God towards us, as his eternal love set and passed upon us, out of which he chose us, and designed this and all blessings to us.
2. *Transient*, in Christ done *for* us; in all he did or suffered representing of us, and in our stead.
3. *Applicatory*, wrought *in* us and upon us, in the endowing us with all those blessings by the Spirit; as calling, justification, sanctification, glorification.<sup>347</sup>

Goodwin argues that the greatness of God's power and mercy is shown most in the third category, but especially under the work of regeneration.

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<sup>347</sup> Vol. 6, p.405



This work of regeneration doth alone make that great alteration mentioned, of a man's state before God for all, and that for ever.<sup>348</sup>

This once for all change is when God gives the believer the full right to all other blessings.<sup>349</sup> Because Christ died but once, so regeneration must happen but once, and there can be no falling away from that state. It brings the believer into an eternal estate never to be changed.

This alone makes the specifical change. All other changes that follow are but gradual....., the change of a man's state of salvation is mainly a moral, legal, forensical change; as that change which of a man condemned to die, unto a state of life.... But over and above such as these, there is a physical change, which is more properly the impress of regeneration, which is a work in us. The other changes are the consequents or concomitants thereof; and that is it that makes a specifical change, as all births, and generations, and corruptions are said to do.<sup>350</sup>

Because this is the decisive moment in salvation there can be no preparation for it, or causing of it from the human will. Just as we could not have created ourselves, and had no input into our own births into this world, so the new birth, the new creation of regeneration is entirely an act of the Spirit. It is a perfect birth, and so must come 'from above' rather than from anything earthly. It is a passing over from one state of humanity to another, from corruption to perfection. This humanity is not simply the humanity of the virgin-born Jesus as He lived His incarnate life, but the resurrected humanity

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<sup>348</sup> Vol. 6, p.407

<sup>349</sup> Vol. 6, p.408

<sup>350</sup> Vol. 6, p.409

that had passed through the condemnation and punishment of sin, being raised to a justified, sin-proof, glorified humanity.

Christ's own resurrection is called his being begotten, so Acts xiii. 33.... The reason whereof I take to be this, because when the human nature that first entered into that estate, which primitively was ordained for him by his Father (for he should not have come into this world clothed with infirmities but for sin, Rom. viii. 3. But the world to come was ordained for him, as this world was for the first Adam); his entrance into that his world being at his resurrection, it may truly be called his begetting, as being then first brought forth into that his world..... Now, as his resurrection is called his begetting again, so our resurrection is called our regeneration [See Matt. 19:28].<sup>351</sup>

By positing a new, righteous humanity revealed in the resurrection, Goodwin is undergirding and explaining how regeneration must be the true foundation of justification in the individual believer, though, of course, the foundation and source of that new life is Jesus Christ. Justification, for Goodwin, is not only about legal status, but about righteousness of life, about holiness of heart and nature. Justification presupposes the destruction of the sinful nature in us, even if this is not absolutely experienced by us as long as we live "between the times".

And answerably is it in the thing in hand, the work of regeneration, wherein mortification, or destroying the body of sin, which is one part of it, is attributed to his death, Rom. vi. 4, and the begetting, or infusing a new principle of life into us, unto his resurrection, ver.5 of the same chapter. And thus likewise in justification; the matter of our righteousness which is imputed is Christ's obedience unto death, but the imputation itself is ascribed to his resurrection, Rom. vi. 25. And so, Rom. v. 10,

our reconciliation is attributed to his death, but our preservation in that estate unto his life and intercession.<sup>352</sup>

Goodwin goes on to explain that by being joined to Christ in His death, accomplished by the Holy Spirit in us as part of the work of regeneration, we are dead to sin, in both its guilt and power. Yet, "it is faith which raiseth us to a life of justification, as, Rom. v. 18, it is called".<sup>353</sup> This is a passing from condemnation into justification of life, a passing from death to life. The Spirit makes a person full of dread and guilt because of the condemnation of their sins, yet He does this to prepare them for the work of regeneration that He works in them. This being bound over to dread, guilt and condemnation through the application of the law by the Spirit in conviction is described as being bound up in the death of Christ, but "out of this death doth faith raise the soul up to a `justification of life'".<sup>354</sup>

## 8. Questions

We must face the question whether Goodwin's doctrine of justification has fallen into pre-Reformation soteriology. Such soteriology is usually described by Protestant polemics as a confusion of justification and sanctification, and given Goodwin's line of reasoning we must examine whether or not he has fallen into this confusion.

The first preliminary point is to make the distinction between a justification that is based upon the righteousness of another, and a justification that is based upon what is internal to the person justified. Goodwin, although

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<sup>352</sup> Vol. 6, p456

<sup>353</sup> Vol. 6, p.458

<sup>354</sup> Vol. 6, p.458

speaking much about the need of a holy nature, does not attribute this holy nature to the personal righteousness of the believer. Believers are justified because their new nature is that of Jesus Christ. Goodwin seems to straddle the two standard categories used for classifying views of justification. He wants to keep the righteousness of Christ, in its threefold form (active, passive and ontological), as the entire basis on which justification is given to the believer. However, Goodwin wants, also, to put that righteousness into the believer as a necessary aspect of justification. This righteousness conveyed by means of regeneration is not a progressive work of infused grace upon the old and fallen humanity of the sinner. No, regeneration is an absolute change, a total rejection of the old humanity and the bringing to birth of a new humanity, the humanity which is Christ's humanity, sin-proof and justified. The mixed living of the Christian is attributed to the co-existence of the old humanity (which can only produce sin) and the new humanity (which can only produce holiness) within the same person. Sin is attributed only to the old humanity, yet the new humanity is perfectly righteous. Justification is never referred to as a process, but always as a forensic judgement from God, even though it presupposes the work of the Spirit in regeneration. On the basis of all this, Goodwin's explanation of justification does not relativise or endanger the absoluteness of justification, nor does it make this legal declaration depend upon the good works of believers, or the progress of sanctification in them. Goodwin's justification is absolute, objective and final because of its grounding in the Person and Work of Christ, yet it is also absolute, subjective and ontological because of its necessary grounding in the believing person by the Holy Spirit in regeneration.

Yet, Goodwin came to the conviction in his early life that one cannot look to the signs of grace within to find justification. That is why he so strongly emphasizes the righteousness of the new nature as being the righteousness

of Christ. One cannot find that perfect righteousness by looking within, because one simply sees the 'outward' appearance of the old humanity. Rather one looks to Christ in order to see the new creation that the believer has really become by the Spirit's work of regeneration. This absolute change does issue in a life of sanctification as the new nature brings forth the fruit of the Spirit, but Goodwin constantly exhorts his readers to look only at Christ as the unambiguous righteousness that the Christian has become.

These observations provide the background for a brief look at the theology of Augustine, to show that Goodwin is not really implicated in his problems.

Augustine starts his theology, in many ways, with the same theological agenda as Goodwin. The two theologians both have a profound grasp of the problem of sin, such that this shapes their theology in many places. Augustine is never satisfied with a purely objective soteriology, because he sees and feels with such intensity the terrible power of sin within his own heart. He almost presupposes that any justification that he receives must deal with the source or root of sin in him. This makes him develop a doctrine of the work of the Spirit that deals with the problem of sin. In his clash with Pelagianism Augustine works out a soteriology that depends heavily upon the Holy Spirit working in the sinful person, because they are incapable of any movement towards God in their sinful corruption. Commenting on this feature of Augustine's theology, George Smeaton says:

Hence man can be called out of this state only by the grace of God's Spirit, which consists, according to [Augustine], not in the mere instruction of the understanding by truth, nor in the mere remission of sins, but in the renewing operations of the Holy

Spirit, and in a new life of love. He describes [the Holy Spirit] as creative, and as transforming the entire man. (Sp. et Lit. iii.)<sup>355</sup>

It can be seen from this quotation that Augustine expresses very similar sentiments to those that we have heard Goodwin express. It is significant that Goodwin quotes Augustine so frequently throughout his Works.

W. G. T. Shedd in his *History of Doctrine*, analyses Augustine's soteriology. His comments are to be respected given that in so many areas, especially in anthropology, Shedd is noted for lifting his views straight out of Augustine. However, he criticizes Augustine's soteriology:

Augustine is not always careful when treating of the grounds of justification, to direct attention to the fact that as far as the guilt of man is concerned, no possible amount of inward righteousness, even though wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, can be an atonement, or ground of acquittal from condemnation. Holiness of heart contains nothing of the nature of expiation. This is found only in judicial suffering.<sup>356</sup>

However, the evidence that Shedd cites to arrive at his charge does not necessarily lead to his conclusion. He quotes Augustine as saying, "God justifies the ungodly not only by remitting the sins he commits, but also by giving him inward love, which causes him to depart from evil, and makes him holy through the Spirit". Shedd asserts that justification rests only upon remission of sins, and remission of sins only upon the atonement of Christ. Goodwin seems to echo the concerns of Augustine, in that remission of sins is not enough. The imputation of Christ's righteousness, and the impartation of Christ's holy nature are also needed to satisfy the law, or mind, of God.

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<sup>355</sup> Smeaton, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, (Edinburgh, 1988), p.336

<sup>356</sup> Shedd, *History of Doctrine*, (Edinburgh, 1867), p.256

Goodwin's emphasis on the Holy Spirit's work in justification may well partly originate in Augustine, although Goodwin much more carefully spells out the scope and efficacy of the completed atonement of Christ's death. The death of Christ, for Goodwin, atones not only for wrong doing, but also for wrong being.

More obvious is Goodwin's position with respect to the Council of Trent. Goodwin spends time and care upon attacking the the basic features of Roman Catholic views of justification. Trent defines justification as relying on two things: the sanctification of the believer, and the work of Christ. God's action in the human, sinful soul causes it to produce good works, including the act of faith, and these good works merit further infusions of grace, which further assist in the progress of sanctification. Justification depends upon the progression of sanctification within the believer.

[T]he notional distinction between *iustificatio* and *regeneratio* provides one of the best *differentiae* between Catholic and Protestant understandings of justification, marking the Reformers' complete discontinuity with the earlier western theological tradition.<sup>357</sup>

Regeneration under the Tridentine scheme is quite unlike that of Goodwin. Regeneration is not an absolute change from death to life, an ontological shift from the old, sinful humanity to the new, holy humanity. Sanctification depends upon infusions of grace into the old humanity, instead of (as in Goodwin's scheme) flowing out of the inherent principles of the new, holy nature that are actuated by the Spirit. Justification is not regeneration for Goodwin, but a forensic view of the one who has the whole righteousness of Christ. Let us hear Trent's own definition of its position:

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<sup>357</sup> A. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, Vol.1, (Cambridge, 1986), p.51

Justification is not the mere remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renovation of the inward man through the voluntary reception of grace and gifts of grace; whereby an unjust man becomes just, the enemy a friend, so that he may be an heir according to the hope of eternal life... The only formal cause of justification is the justice of God, not that by which he himself is just, but that by which he makes us just, - that namely by which we are gratuitously renewed by him in the spirit of our minds, and are not only reputed, but really are and denominated just, receiving righteousness into ourselves each one according to his own measure, which the Holy Spirit imparts to each as he pleases, and, also, according to each one's own disposition and co-operation....<sup>358</sup>

This makes it clear that for Trent justification is a progressive and relative process, that varies in extent with each individual according to their co-operation with the work of the Holy Spirit. Such a scheme is anathema to Goodwin. For him, good works do not provide the ground of justification. Rather they are evidence of the absolute change of nature that the Spirit has effected in regeneration. The issue is beyond doubt when the anathemas of Trent are examined:

If any one shall say that the sinner is justified by faith alone, in the sense that nothing else is required which may co-operate towards the attainment of the grace of justification, and that sinner does not need to be prepared and disposed, by the motion of his own will: let him be accursed<sup>359</sup>

In Volume 5 Goodwin goes to great lengths to demonstrate that no righteousness that belongs to the believer, even the righteousness of good works done after regeneration, can offer anything towards their justification, which is totally dependent upon the righteousness of Christ. Arguing from

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<sup>358</sup> *Canones Concilii Tridentini: De Justificatione*, vii, viii

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.



Phil. 3:9 Goodwin says that Paul is not referring to the Pharisaical righteousness that he has counted as dung, that righteousness which he had 'achieved' in Judaism. Rather, Paul is referring to the righteousness that was his in the Christian life, evangelical righteousness. Totally rejecting the Roman position that such works may justify because they spring from the grace of God working in the person through the Holy Spirit, Goodwin says:

The apostle carries that very thing as the reason to the contrary, and to exclude all inherent holiness after conversion, ver.10, as well as afore, even for this reason, because they are the effects of a new creation, and so given upon a supernatural account of mere grace.<sup>360</sup>

[T]he papists themselves (to do Bellarmine and their doctrine this right) do acknowledge that works done afore regeneration, though never so outwardly righteous, are excluded from that first justification (as they by distinction call it); yea, he confesseth that justification is then therefore only in and through Christ's blood. But then after conversion, they say, there is a second justification, whereby a man is judged worthy of eternal glory, and such and such degrees of it; and this they attribute to good works after conversion, dipped in Christ's blood. A man in and by regeneration being made inherently righteous, and set up anew, begins with a new stock, and so trades for eternal life. And that is their error.<sup>361</sup>

The notion that any good works, even if they are perfect and quite undefiled by any sin, can add to or even merely sustain a person's status as justified is the decisive error of Bellarmine (and Roman theology), according to Goodwin. When Goodwin is spelling out his understanding of the new principles given in the new nature at regeneration by the Holy Spirit, he again

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<sup>360</sup> Vol. 5, p.365. See also p.352-365

<sup>361</sup> Vol. 6, p.93

differentiates himself from "the papists". He begins by stating his own position:

Doct. That over and above exciting, and moving, and aiding grace unto acts, there are inwrought and infused in the soul at regeneration, inherent and abiding principles of spiritual life, by which the soul is inwardly fitted, capacitated, inclined, and quickened unto the operations of a spiritual life.<sup>362</sup>

The first thing Goodwin does after stating this, is to say what he does not mean by refuting the Roman view:

Though the papists very much speak of habitual grace as a principle by which the soul acts, yet they assert that the first and only grace that actually turns the soul is no more than exciting and adjuvant grace; and that so to conversion it is sufficient that we be aided and assisted by divine grace, without receiving a new principle of life from it. But yet they say when a man hath turned to God out of free will, excited by an internal motion of grace at first, then God infuseth a habit of grace as a root, or a radical principle of good works.... that for which God adopts and accepts a man to eternal life, as that which... constitutes him righteous.<sup>363</sup>

Goodwin's rejection of this doctrine is very straightforward and definite:

We detest that doctrine of infusion of habits for justification, or as a foundation of works, to make them meritorious. But we say they are simply required for man's acting holily, and for pleasing God by good works, which good works declare and assert withal that in our regeneration, from the first acts to the last, and so throughout our lives, there are infused supernatural principles of life and grace, which remain and are inherent in us.<sup>364</sup>

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362 Vol. 6, p.187

363 Vol. 6, p.187

364 Vol. 6, p.189

It seems obvious that we can clear Goodwin of the charge of confusing justification and sanctification. To be justified is to have the whole righteousness of Christ, including his holy nature. To be regenerated is to have passed through the death and into the resurrection of Christ, being born into that newness of life, which is the life that God has justified. Sanctification is the inevitable consequence of this justification/regeneration.

## 9. Conclusions

Goodwin's soteriology is more like that of the early Melancthon and Luther, than Protestant theology after about 1530. He sees justification as being based on personal union with Christ rather than legal union. For Goodwin, no-one participates in the merits of Christ's Person and Work unless they are brought into ontological union with Him. Just as it is ontological union through generation that brings humanity into the guilt, corruption and condemnation of Adam, so it is ontological union through regeneration that brings humans into the righteousness, purity and justification of Christ. By organising his soteriology in this way Goodwin is able to deepen and strengthen the place of the Spirit in the work of salvation. However, he does not make the Spirit the centre of his soteriology. The Spirit's work is totally focussed on the prior work of Christ.

Barth sees being-in-Christ as the true understanding of justification - as well as election, sanctification and regeneration. However, Barth does not explicitly integrate the Holy Spirit into this scheme in the way that Goodwin does. By holding both a Christocentric juridical ontology and a Pneumatology strongly focussed on the subjective realization of this being-in-Christ, Goodwin

integrates Christ and the Spirit in a soteriological scheme that is of significant interest to the ongoing theological debate.

## Chapter 4

### The Holy Spirit in Goodwin's Ecclesiology.

#### 1. Introduction:

John Zizoulas, in a paper delivered at King's College Research Seminar drew out the ecclesiological implications of a thoroughly Trinitarian theology. During this he showed that if a theologian cannot conceive of the local church as complete in itself then he has too weak a Pneumatology. If he is unable to give a proper account of the unity of the church then his Christology is similarly too weak. If this analysis is correct then the strength of Goodwin's commitment to the local church as the basic and true form of the church must be a symptom of his strong Pneumatology. ref ?

Yet though Goodwin had such a well developed Pneumatology, he did not go down the road of the 'radicals' with an egalitarian, charismatic church structure. By taking the Trinity as the foundation of the church's being and structure Goodwin was able to be a chief exponent of Independency at the Westminster Assembly, yet at the same time avoid the multiform dangers of the separatist movement which tended towards sectarianism.

Luther was primarily and passionately concerned for the purity of the gospel: Calvin for the purity of the Church - the gospel had already been brought into the light of day. All the crises of Luther's life were centred on the gospel: all Calvin's on the Church. This is a distinct difference of emphasis and one which becomes apparent in their respective doctrines of the marks of the true Church.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> Paul Avis: The Reformers' doctrine of the Church, (London, 1981) p.13

As we examine Goodwin's ecclesiology we will see that in many ways, whether consciously or unconsciously, he mediates between the concerns of Luther and Calvin. His striving for a pure church never becomes obscured behind an obsession with church discipline. With Luther he wants to hold the church as an essentially spiritual body, but with Calvin he wants to maintain that body as an ordered, coherent grouping. The essentially congregational ecclesiology of the early Luther finds many echoes in Goodwin, yet Goodwin cannot except the charismatic, pneumatic consequences of that first explosive, radical Luther who made the church structures, order, discipline and hierarchy quite inconsequential compared to the all-consuming centre of the gospel of Jesus Christ, made visible in preaching and sacraments. It could be said that in Goodwin we find the gauntlet of Reformation ecclesiology taken up, yet organized into a workable form.

## 2. Goodwin's Ecclesiological Principles

We begin with a survey of Goodwin's congregational polemic in the hotly contested ecclesiological debates which were fought over so vigorously throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Volume 11 of the works of Goodwin is devoted entirely to the matter of 'the government of the churches of Christ'. He begins by laying out what he believes to be the three basic alternatives:

- 1 Presbyterian: the belief that the visible church is universal, divided into parts at national and local level, each part having the nature of the whole.

**2 The radical position:** the belief that Christians form the invisible church and only by a consequence of this organize into local fellowships. Under this model there is no such thing as church institution at all.

**3 Congregational:** the belief that one's ecclesiology should contain the following features:

- a) a visible church and an invisible universal church which is mystical;
- b) until heaven, God has appointed local churches, governed by church officers without the help of the civil magistrates;
- c) explicit rules for the organization of such local churches;
- d) the congregation with its officers as the sole seat of church government;
- e) a non-formal communion between all the local churches.

It is significant that Goodwin does not see the Episcopalian option as a viable alternative. This may well reflect the political situation at the time Vol. II was written, in that the armies holding political power were either Cromwell's Congregationalists or the Scottish Presbyterians.

Goodwin begins by laying down the basic principles by which he will formulate his ecclesiology.

Right government of a church is a part of worship under the New Testament. The law of nature is not sufficient to set up anything which is parallel to a divine institution, so there must be a special divine institution for the government of the churches of Christ. Giving certain officers special powers in spiritual matters of government cannot be done by nature. "As the power is from God, so in whom this power should be is also from him and by

his appointment". It is not for the church to convey but for God through the church as he sees fit.

God's institution is what gives church censures power - they are thus accompanied by a supernatural power. Because of all this the constitution of churches is uniform; there is no room for personal tastes, fancy or regional variation.

The comparison of Moses and Christ is extremely important for Goodwin. In Hebrews 3:1-3 Moses and Christ are compared as being in charge of the house of God - therefore both must have rules and order to govern such households. A house needs a plan and order to be built and the builder of the church is God not humanity (I Timothy 3.15). Just as we like to dream of designing a perfect house for ourselves Christ does too.<sup>366</sup>

However, Goodwin is faced with a problem. In the Old Testament there was a vast body of explicit and highly detailed rules and regulations to precisely describe the government and order of the household of God under Moses. This is obviously not the case in the New Testament under Christ.

[Moses'] law was given to a church and nation formed up and that by writing from the first. But the Apostles did not so; they delivered these rules to the churches by way of tradition 1 Corinthians 11.1 & 2 ..... it was the pleasure and mind of the Holy Ghost to leave to posterity these rules which the Apostles expressly gave out to churches then by word of mouth, to leave them, I say, to posterity in writing, by hinting what practices were in churches recorded in the Epistles and the Acts; so as what was delivered to them in a way of command positively is

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<sup>366</sup> See Vol. 11, p. 20



traduced to us, by way of example, how churches were then governed.<sup>367</sup>

In a footnote Goodwin speculates how good a project it would be to note how every aspect of what he regarded as New Testament ecclesiology could be found as a *vestigium* in some of the historical churches, enabling one to prove church practice by Scripture, by spiritual reason, by the opinion of the reformed churches, and by the traditions in all the churches. Goodwin even admits that the customs of the churches mentioned in I Corinthians 13 remained in a vestigial form (with superadditions and perversions) in the church of Rome.<sup>368</sup>

We may discover what are the true church institutions by observing the behaviour of the Apostles. Christ told the Apostles what to do, so in Acts we must assume that is what they are doing: Acts 1.2 - Christ by the Spirit gave explicit commandments before his ascension to his Apostles. Paul had been taught by the Spirit in Arabia the very same practices that the other Apostles were doing in Jerusalem. In I Timothy 3 he describes these practices as the command of God and in I Corinthians 14 tells the church to follow the example of the other apostolic churches. Goodwin feels that people follow examples better than instruction of precept. The Apostles, being led by an infallible Spirit provided such examples in their evangelistic work throughout the world all agreeing in one spirit conspiring to do the same things.<sup>369</sup>

For Goodwin excommunication is the test case of the efficacy and spirituality of church government. He rejects any naturalistic interpretations of

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<sup>367</sup> Vol. 11, p. 23&24

<sup>368</sup> Vol. 11, p. 24n

<sup>369</sup> See Vol.11, pp. 28-36

excommunication, seeing it as essentially a handing over to Satan (1 Corinthians 5.5). This is more than simply being outside the church:

1. It signifies a positive punishment from Satan. To give a person to Satan is an act of authority as a judge giving a person to a jailor. It is not merely leaving them for Satan, but giving them to Satan. To merely exclude a person from the church is the same power that all societies have - but this is more.

2. Excommunication does not destroy the soul but the body, whereas simply being out of the church as the world is, is to be unregenerate. Christians may eat with those of the world, but not with an excommunicated person.

3. Excommunication is a discipline (1 Timothy 1.20 *paideuthos*).

4. Someone deserving excommunication is probably too hardened to care about the loss of the ordinances, so they need Satan to work 'terrors and humiliations' to correct them.

5. Such a person has grieved the Holy Ghost the Comforter, so they are given to Satan as tormentor, which is the opposite of joy in the Spirit.

6. Excommunication binds sin on the conscience - definitely a power above nature.

7. When excommunication is not executed the Lord 'works terrors of conscience' anyway.

8. In II Corinthians 2.7 Paul says that he felt swallowed up by sorrow. This could not be from the Holy Spirit, so he asks for forgiveness from the Corinthians, implying that he was in Satan's power.

It may be objected that such spiritual punishments do not always come upon an excommunicate person. Goodwin responds by saying that very few excommunications have been valid according to the scriptural criteria, there has been too much trust in the magistrate, God is free to do as he pleases, and there is separation from the Holy Ghost even if no terrors come upon the person.

For Christ still blesseth his own ordinance, when in that right hand he hath placed it, and it may well be thought one, if not the main reason, why the edge of this sword hath been found so blunt and dull... that there hath been more power in one excommunication in the primitive times, than in all since, though backed with the civil sword; because it hath been in them that have not had the right of jurisdiction to execute it; that whereas Tertullian says, it was in their congregations *tanquam fulmen*, as a thunderbolt, it hath been *brutem fultem* to us, a thunderbolt of no force; *nulla major nullitas quam defectus juris, nec major defectus quam jurisdictionis*, there is no greater nullity than a deficiency of right, nor a greater defect than that of jurisdiction.<sup>370</sup>

For Goodwin Matthew 18 is the primary foundation of church government. He exegetes this passage as Christ giving instructions to the future church concerning how it should be organized. So when Jesus says "go tell the church" it means that authority and power is signified, invested in that company called a church. Without this institution what power could a

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<sup>370</sup> Vol.11, p. 131

church assume to deliver a man to Satan which is far beyond their natural and moral power to do?

In order to establish the particularity of the church intended by Jesus, Goodwin argues that Jesus modelled church government and order upon the way the Jewish synagogues were arranged.

In the Septuagint 'synagogue' and 'ecclesia' are synonymous, thus to be cast out of the church corresponds to the Jewish ejection out of the synagogue. Just as the Jews formed into synagogues because of their being dispersed, so when the Christians were similarly dispersed "Christ suited a government to these conditions of the synagogue-government... in imitation of the Jews dispersed ..... Christ chose not the legal way of a national church or of a Sanhedron, or of going up to one temple for a whole nation, but he fixed on synagogues ..... therefore we read of the churches of Judea itself and not church, Galatians 1.22".<sup>371</sup>

Christ is laying the structural foundations for the building work of the Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Spirit who was to come to the disciples later who would instruct them and enlighten them in Christ's administrative teaching. In this way Goodwin can quite definitely assert that Christ built his church by instituting baptism, the Lord's supper and even excommunication, while on the earth.

As Moses was interpreted by the prophets, so is Christ's mind in this to be known by his apostles; for the Spirit came on them and did reveal to them Christ's mind and intention. The trial, therefore, will lie upon this, what bodies, and consisting of whom,

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<sup>371</sup> Vol.11, p. 70

are called a church in the Acts of the apostles, and in their epistles.<sup>372</sup>

Goodwin argues that the congregation where God is worshipped publicly, where the word is preached and where the sacraments are administered is the place the New Testament calls the church. Given that the "classical church" [the term that Goodwin uses to describe the way the church was governed throughout the western world up till the Reformation, and still proposed by the Presbyterians and Episcopalians] is not a place of worship nor a preaching venue, nor is it a fellowship for the breaking of bread, it cannot be described as a church in the New Testament sense.

Worship is the chief end of a church. The formal notion of a church is to meet and communicate in worship: and where there can be no church fellowship and communion to the edification of the whole there cannot be a church.<sup>373</sup>

*Ecclesia est numerus fidelium in cultu divino et disciplina communicantium.*<sup>374</sup> Therefore, according to Goodwin, a presbyterial church is not a church, because they do not meet for worship, only discipline.

Goodwin constantly labours the point that there is not one place in the New Testament where the name "church" is given to the meeting of the elders alone. He cites Clement of Rome in his letter to the Corinthian church, who writes to the church of Corinth and not to the presbyters. Goodwin notes with

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<sup>372</sup> Vol.11, p.72

<sup>373</sup> Vol.11, p.89

<sup>374</sup> The church is a number of believers communing in divine worship and discipline.

glee that the apostles too in their epistles write to churches and not to presbyters.

The institution of congregational churches "was such as would suit all times, of the beginning of the gospel and of the continuance of the gospel". Similarly it suits all places, villages just as well as the largest cities. The institution of Congregational churches suits every possible condition of the church of Christ:

1. times of persecution as well as times of peace;
2. the universal church gathered in one locality as at the very first and as now scattered throughout the whole world;
3. no matter what nation the church is in;
4. in times when the church is pure or corrupt, reformed or to be reformed;
5. even when the church has become smothered with false superstructures for example patriarchs, archbishops, bishops (in that hierarchical way), general councils and other subordinate assemblies.

However, simply because Congregational government of the churches is the most practical for every possible time, place or condition does not automatically give it ecclesiological validity. The real question concerns whether it is of divine institution or not. For Goodwin, nature is so dependent upon grace that it is inconceivable for nature to take it upon itself to set up and give efficacy to the structures, offices and powers of a church.

Because nature is so dependent upon grace, and nature could never establish the divine institution of the church, Goodwin sets himself to prove two things:

1. The forming of elders into a governing body needs a special institution, giving the limits of the extent of their power.

2. The setting out of the extent or limit of that body of saints and officers called a church equally needs a special institution.

Christ, as the supreme founder of the church, holds the charter governing the church.

For extensive power must be warranted by institution, as well as intensive, or the measure or kind of power; whereas yet we perceive many that are zealous for institutions in those other things, would (so far as we can understand) have the boundaries of the extent of power ecclesiastical to be left (with other things of less moment) to be ordered only according to the common rules of edification, and of the law of nature, as human prudence shall think fit to dispose and set them out.<sup>375</sup>

### 3. Congregational Ecclesiology

So, what justification does Goodwin offer for his church government? Having set the stakes so high, how can he fulfil his own challenge?

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<sup>375</sup> Vol.11, p. 119

If Paul in I Corinthians 5 says "Do not ye judge them that are within? What have I to judge them that are without?", we can be sure that he knew the limits of his own jurisdiction - "I that am an apostle (says he) have a limited jurisdiction in my kind, and you in yours, and as I am to do my duty in my jurisdiction, so you in yours. And if the apostle would not stretch himself beyond his line (as his own phrase is) of jurisdiction set out to him, then ordinary elders much less are to go beyond theirs".<sup>376</sup>

True to form Goodwin has a well-developed and comprehensive understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in fixing these ecclesiastical boundaries.

The Holy Ghost hath appointed the extent of elders' jurisdiction over their own flocks, and to extend to every soul therein in particular, each over the whole flock whereof they are elders, and that as a whole flock, importing an entire body of persons committed to them ..... Now we have an express Scripture concerning the elders of the church of Ephesus ..... that they all and every one of them had an extent of power by express commission given them to that whole flock, and that the Holy Ghost set them over that whole flock, as in a charge commended to them: Acts 20.28 - "Take heed to yourselves, and all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers". Men had not chalked out the limits of this flock, nor set them out this their bonds of power and care over it, but the Holy Ghost made them overseers, that is, constituted them, as Hebrews 3.2 it is said of Moses. And when it is said of the personal call of those elders, for ordinary elders were not chosen by an immediate revelation of the Holy Ghost, as Paul and Barnabas was: 'The Holy Ghost said, separate me Paul and Barnabas' Acts 13.2. But so these elders were not made here: the constitution, or making, or appointing and instituting them, must therefore necessarily be meant of the Holy Ghost's appointing that office of elders in which they were, and that he specially was the author by his institution of that kind of designment of elders to an whole flock as elders, as their special charge, within which to take care as elders of all, and by virtue of which (they undertaking the charge) the institution and

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<sup>376</sup> Vol.11, p. 121



commission of the Holy Ghost fell upon them ..... And what is attributed to the Holy Ghost thus, respects not a prudential management only, but the Holy Ghost's office being in a special manner to be the author of that word, and those directions of Christ, by which the apostles did give forth the pattern of ordering and framing churches to these Ephesians and other churches, therefore it is peculiarly appropriated to him to be the author of all such constitutions ecclesiastical, and this by so peculiar a prerogative, as is as proper to him as to redeem is to the Son ..... And therefore, as to the work of the Holy Ghost to the church herein, mention is made of it, parallel with Christ's redemption, in those words: 'Take heed to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased by his own blood'.<sup>377</sup>

Goodwin argues that if this position of elders in the Ephesian church was by the institution of the Holy Ghost, then the Presbyterians and Episcopalians must show an equal institution by the Holy Ghost for any further extension of church government.

This rich view of the Holy Spirit in ecclesiology in Goodwin echoes certain patristic views of the church and the Holy Spirit. As Cyprian can claim that the Holy Spirit is the church, so Goodwin can describe the Holy Spirit as the instituter, ordainer and life of the church.

It is quite significant that although Goodwin normally attributes the design and institution of the church to Jesus Christ, yet he can also attribute the very words of Jesus to the Holy Spirit - "the Holy Ghost's office being in a special manner to be the author of that word, and those directions of Christ". This is an outworking of his strong belief in Christ's dependence on the Holy Spirit. Without the gift of specially revealed knowledge and wisdom no fully human person could give such instructions and teaching as Jesus gave.

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<sup>377</sup> Vol.11, p. 121

Therefore, in order to preserve the full humanity of the Incarnate Son, Goodwin again gives full place to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The consequence of this is to give the Holy Spirit a major role in ecclesiology. The very words of Jesus were given by the Spirit, because Jesus mediated the ecclesiology of the Spirit to the apostles.

God does not govern his church in an immediate way, appearing to the church directly to order it. Yet, he must determine the government of the church Himself because of the inherent corruption in fallen humanity, particularly when it comes to matters of power - "Of all sort of power, church power is that wherein, when men have any part or pretence to it, they are more apt to be ambitious of extending it than any other".

Although God works immediately in the regenerating of the saints, He does not do so in the appointing of church officers. He mediates His work through the church itself.

Because God makes not elders immediately by his providential converting and working on them, for so he makes saints; and yet he gives not, say our brethren, the power to them, but as united into an orderly body by institution, in which they exercise each to other.... Their being elders at least is in order to a relation, and not by providential immediate working on them, or from God's giving them gifts, or by an immediate call, as the apostles were chosen, afore God erected his church.... There must be formed bodies to give rise to their call, by designing and accepting them.<sup>378</sup>

Goodwin rejects the accusation from the radicals that all ordinances are mere forms, ranked equally with all the idolatries in Popery or any other

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<sup>378</sup> Vol.11, p. 128

superstitions.<sup>379</sup> Jesus was filled with the Spirit without measure, yet he was baptized, keeping all the Jewish ordinances of worship, such as going to the feasts, going to the Passover etc. Such 'seekers' pretend to live in the Spirit above such things but fall under the condemnation of Jude 18 - 21 "..... these be they which separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit .....". Goodwin decides not to engage in their 'evasions', preferring to assert the revealed ordinances positively.<sup>380</sup>

Goodwin cannot tolerate the 'charismatic' ecclesiology of the radical puritans, who would have church organization abandoned in favour of a sort of pneumatic community in which the gifts of the Spirit are allowed to be freely expressed without any formal control. The "possession of gifts" would then be the sole criteria for ministry within the gathering. Goodwin opposes this by insisting that God does not bestow gifts to be exercised in isolation from the determinative call of the church itself. Unless a man is set aside, by the local church, for ministry, he does not have an office in the church, no matter how spiritually gifted he may believe himself to be.

Thus, Goodwin's high Pneumatology does not lead him into playing down the community of the church. Whereas he asserts on the one hand the immediate witness of the Spirit in the sealing of assurance, on the other hand Goodwin keeps the local church community (as a community not a mere

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<sup>379</sup> This same accusation exists still today in various radical Christian groups. We may think of the Central London Church of Christ, which teaches that any practice that is followed in the same way for more than a few weeks becomes empty, superstitious, 'traditional' baggage which prevents the Christian from enjoying the liberty of the Spirit. Of course, such groups are bound in the tyranny of innovation, doomed to be wearily repetitious as ill thought *ex tempore* forms are trundled out each week.

<sup>380</sup> Vol.11, p. 37

association of individual believers) as the vital relationship between Christ and His people.

At the beginning of Book III in Volume 11 Goodwin makes a proposition that lies at the very foundation of the ecclesiology that he is proposing, and it is the proposal that has always been the congregational objection to Presbyterian, Anglican and Roman Catholic ecclesiologies: "one single congregation of saints, having a sufficient number of elders and officers, is an entire seat of all acts of government, and of excommunication itself, as well as worship".<sup>381</sup>

This statement makes Goodwin's ecclesiology revolutionary: if he is right about this then the whole approach to questions about unity and catholicity must be reassessed. The 'scandal of division' will need to be understood against a very different background. If the thesis of the Congregationalists is correct then so much of modern ecumenism is proceeding on a wrong footing, under the wrong assumptions. As radical as such a statement sounds, it seems to be the unavoidable conclusion from the congregational thesis.

Goodwin begins with the argument that if a church and its officers have the power and competence to admit people into membership, then they must have the power and competence to excommunicate a person from the church without having to go to other churches for help. Both activities are of the same order, both deal with the same qualitative aspect of church government. Excommunicating does not require more ecclesiastical power than admitting - In fact, if the church is taken seriously, admittance is a matter of greater

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<sup>381</sup> Vol. 11, p.132

moment. The Holy Spirit forms up each local church and He provides the church with all the authority that is needed. The power of the church is spiritual, not derived from the weight of ecclesiastical structures.

If a single congregation may suspend one of their members from partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper without having to consult some superior body or group of other churches, then a single congregation certainly has the power to excommunicate.

As a minister, if he be a true and lawful minister, hath sufficiency both of gifts and power to do what belongeth unto him as a minister, as to acts of all sorts, and the least as well as the greatest ..... if they be fit for one act of government, then for all acts of all sorts and kinds.<sup>382</sup>

Developing this point Goodwin argues that if it is the congregation in the church that is to make authoritative admonitions to those in danger of excommunication, then the basis of the power of excommunication is not in a classical body of presbyters, but in the elders of a local congregation, empowered to act as representatives of the local congregation. Only the offender's peers, those who have had fellowship with him, those who know his circumstances and have a direct, intimate care for him, may properly admonish him for his sins. The place of fellowship, of communion in the Spirit, is the place for church government to take place.

Therefore they are to sympathize with him, to be humbled together with him for his sin, to bemoan and bewail him and

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<sup>382</sup> Vol. 11, p.137

themselves, that such a punishment, even as to them, should befall him, by such a sin falling out amongst them.<sup>383</sup>

The church is a personal intimate body of fellowship; the national councils cannot govern this body in such a personal way. Church government is not about hierarchical authority structures, administrating on a large scale, but about mutual care, mutual sorrow over sin.

The first churches planted by the apostles were sufficient to the task of church government. The apostles did not delay their travels until they had formed several churches into a presbytery. Those first churches were self-sufficient in terms of church government.

We further add, that suppose that these churches came to be multiplied, or to have neighbour churches near them, what became of that power and right, which as congregations having elders in them, and as a church to Christ, they were invested with? How should this power come to be taken away, or they come to lose it, and be transferred into an associate presbytery of many congregations?<sup>384</sup>

Goodwin cites the fifth canon of the council of Nice where it mentions that one of the reasons that synods were appointed was to inform all the churches concerning the people who had been excommunicated by a particular bishop. He takes this to prove that excommunication was not an activity of all the churches considered as a single institution, but as the activity of many relatively independent bodies who would not know of each other's decisions without some kind of voluntary church councils.

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<sup>383</sup> Vol. 11, p.156

<sup>384</sup> Vol. 11, p.159

#### 4. Church Communion

##### (a). Limitations

What is the basis of inter-church communion? What relationships are to be encouraged between the local churches?

We acknowledge that by virtue of the consideration of the church universal, whereof each congregation is a part, and by virtue of churches being in a nation of the same language, under the same civil government, or living in the same neighbourhood, and being of the same judgement, there is to be a great and near communion to be according to such respects.<sup>385</sup>

For Goodwin there is a two-fold communion between the churches. Firstly, there is the communion of the mystical church, that is "the invisible company of the elect". Just as every part of a body of water bears the name "water", so every part of that full body of God's elect is called the church. The Christians gathered together in a locality may be called the church in the New Testament *sub consideratione mystica*, not considered as a politic body in itself. Thus, Saul persecuted the church (1 Corinthians 15.9) - not the church universal, nor the church considered as a political body, but rather it was the church considered as all the saints in every place. Secondly, there is a fellowship between each local church with its fellow local churches. This fellowship is, of course, founded upon the fellowship of the saints in the church considered mystically, yet it is not the same fellowship.

Take all mankind as they are made of one blood, under the general notions and consideration of being men; by virtue hereof

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<sup>385</sup> Vol.11, p. 261

there is a communion that one man may have with another, and there duties that do arise; and as it is the law of nature, singly and apart considered, which obligeth them, as they are men, so answerably there is a communion, and there is a duty which every man oweth to every man as a man, and a duty which one man oweth to many men, considered as many, or to a greater number of mankind.<sup>386</sup>

So, saints have a fellowship with saints in every local church, including their own. The same kind of fellowship exists between local churches, which also includes duties of care, concern, support and encouragement. Just as nations make treaties and alliances with one another, relating to one another as separate entities possessing a similar nature, so local churches deal with one another.

There is a personalism in this kind of ecclesiastical government which seems to disappear if authority is located in hierarchical structures rather than in personal knowledge and concern. It is not so much instituted structures that guarantee proper authority so much as a life in the authority of the Spirit.<sup>387</sup>

Churches are to relate to one another in the context of fellowship [*koinonia*], not in the context of centralized authority structures. It is not that the exercise of authority is itself a denial of fellowship, but that the place for instituted church authority is the local church, not the inter-church setting.

Just as a crowd of human beings does not possess, *de facto*, any authority over another human being, so a number of churches do not acquire a

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<sup>386</sup> Vol. 11, p.262

<sup>387</sup> See On Being the Church, ed. C.E. Gunton and D. Hardy: "The Church on Earth: The Roots of Community", by C. Gunton, (Edinburgh, 1989) esp. pp. 62ff.



right of control over a particular church. Goodwin spells out how a number of churches may function towards one particular church:

1. A number of churches may admonish another church and may even decide not to have fellowship with that congregation any longer, but they can never exercise the judicial power of excommunication.

2. A great number of churches do possess an impression of authority and persuasiveness simply because there are many of them, but this psychological authority is not a juridical authority instituted by Christ.

3. The churches are to offer respect and honour towards one another because of their mystical communion in Christ, yet this respect and honour must not lend a church to regard another church as having instituted authority given by Christ, over them or any other church.

4. Other churches may admonish, reprove and advise any church in the name of Christ, but it must never be forgotten that such dealing is in the name of Christ, in the sense that it is an appeal to the virtue of Christ, to the common cause that the churches have in Christ. But, it may not be seen as some authority given them in Christ.

5 A group of churches may even command a fellow church in the name of Christ, and that local church may be duty bound to obey that command. In I Corinthians 16.16 Paul tells the church to submit themselves to ministers who are working for the gospel. Yet "it is not *subjectio legalis*, a subjection by law of authority ..... , such as a man hath to his own bishop, but *moralis, qualem reverentes praeferimus virtute excellentibus*, but a moral subjection, such as

we yield in reverence to those who excel in virtue".<sup>388</sup> In the fellowship of the Spirit there is a mutuality amongst Christians, whether they are of the same church or of another church. The community of Christ in the Spirit (what Goodwin calls the mystical body of Christ) is formed for mutual edification, and is not set up as a monolithic authority structure. A local church must relate to another local church as one person relates to a dear friend, full of respect, concern and willingness to help.<sup>389</sup>

#### (b). Duties

Having set the limitations of inter-church fellowship, Goodwin goes on to set out the positive duties of one loyal church to another.

1. They are to share spiritual insights and treasures with each other, as the Philippian church shared its epistle with the other churches of Asia.

2. There should be a sharing of sacraments and ministry among all those who are in good fellowship with their local church.

3. When one local church denies communion to a member, this should be also maintained by all the other churches. Goodwin believes that the maintenance of this uniformity of discipline is the one great use of synods.

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<sup>388</sup> Vol.11, p. 266. However, Goodwin adds the vital proviso that if a pastor from a fellow congregation comes to preach, he must be accorded full respect, but not that "special peculiar subjection, which, by virtue of Christ's institution, a congregation owes to their own pastor".

<sup>389</sup> This flavour of inter-church fellowship comes out in the letters that Basil of Caesarea writes to other church leaders. There is a mutuality in them, at their best, that captures the spirit of Goodwin's hope. See especially the letters between Basil and Athanasius concerning the divisions in the churches. (*Epp.* lxi., lxvi., lxvii., lxi., lxxx., lxxxii. [*A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Volume VIII* (Edinburgh, 1989)]).

As we have communion with the universal church by having communion with a particular church, so we are cast out of all churches by virtue of being cast out by one, the trust being committed by Christ to particular churches.<sup>390</sup>

4. Local churches that have a lack of church officers should be supported by those churches that are large and well-equipped. However, no sense of jurisdiction over another church must creep into this matter at all. The fact that a church may have various needs does not reflect upon the Holy Spirit's commitment to provide everything that the local church needs. It is actually in the sharing and helping of churches, the 'richer' in one area helping the 'poorer' in another, that inter-church communion is advanced.

5. The churches should have a communion with one another in the matter of advice. When difficult issues arise those churches with experience in the matter can give advice to a church that needs it. However, "there is as much power in the church itself, to deal with its own members alone of itself, as in all the advice is given but as alms is given to a neighbour church".<sup>391</sup>

6. Local churches are to communicate material treasures to one another, just as Titus in 2 Corinthians 7.14 carried various alms to the various churches.

7. The churches should do certain things *res communes*. As the right hand of fellowship is extended to other fellowships, this should include informing the churches of all ministerial appointments. However, the

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<sup>390</sup> Vol.11, p. 267

<sup>391</sup> Vol.11, p. 268

"neighbour-ministers" do not have the power of either ordaining or deposing the minister of another congregation.

A particular church may, on occasion, invite the officers of another church to exercise authority and jurisdiction in their congregation, but this must be by invitation and does not become an enduring, fixed instituted jurisdiction.

Churches in the same geographical locality are inevitably bound up with one another in closer fellowship than with all the local churches dispersed throughout the whole world. Their common language, culture, government etc. all make this acceptable.

We have presented these aspects of Goodwin's ecclesiological polemic in order to show how he is committed to a personalism above structuralism in questions of authority. This seems to flow directly from his Pneumatological emphases: the church is concerned with the universalizing direction of Christology, but is equally centred upon the particularizing direction of Pneumatology.<sup>392</sup> Goodwin's axiomatic concern that authority should only be exercised in the context of the worshipping, fellowshipping community shows clearly his commitment to the 'two hands of God'. A Congregational ecclesiology demands a far more developed Pneumatology than an ecclesiology that locates its organization and sufficiency in the social and political phenomena of Church denominations. Goodwin, through his Congregationalist ecclesiology, is able to see very clearly that if the local fellowship loses the presence and anointing of the Spirit then it ceases to be a church, whereas there is an assumption of 'givenness' about Roman Catholic

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<sup>392</sup> See C. Gunton's article "The Church on Earth", in On Being the Church ed. C. E. Gunton and D. W. Hardy, pp. 48-80

ecclesiology as it locates the presence of the Spirit in the very being or structures of the denomination. In such structuralist ecclesiology the Spirit is tied to the structures regardless of the spiritual health of the office-bearers. The Old Testament's history of God's rejection of His own forms of temple worship when they were empty of genuine human commitment stand as a stark rejection of such structuralist self-confidence.

### 5. The Nature of the Congregational Church

Having worked his way through the relevant ecclesiastical disputes, Goodwin finally comes to the positive, constructive work of describing the "rise, institution and definition" of a congregational church.

That God should have a church is "exceeding natural and requisite", because the divine nature desires it.<sup>393</sup> At this point Goodwin asks the fundamental question about the true nature of the church: what is its final foundational source? He locates this in the very being of God, picking up the theme that is worked out in John Zizoulas and, in a different way, in Karl Barth.

The divine nature in God desires it. As it desires communication of itself to the creatures, that they may glorify him, so it designed a communication of itself to many, and to many together united, mutually to praise him. The God head itself is naturally communicated to three persons, who mutually rejoice each in the other, and together in the union and participation of such glorious attributes.<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>393</sup> Vol.11, p. 286

<sup>394</sup> Vol.11, p.286

Here Goodwin cites Proverbs 8.30 where the wisdom of Yahweh is describing his life and work: "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him". The fellowship that the three persons of the Godhead enjoy is not selfishly hoarded up, but God desires His creatures to be taken up into the same fellowship - "not only each apart with himself, but mutually together to glorify him, which is the nature of the church".<sup>395</sup>

As the three persons are united in one, so they desire to bring the creatures together in one (John 17.21, 23). This is why the gospel is called "the fellowship of the mystery" (Eph 3.9).

Therefore, before God will fully communicate Himself, He must first have a meeting-place, an assembly of the people.

This desire for a church where the divine life may be communicated, particularized in each member of the Trinity.<sup>396</sup> In Ephesians 1.22 the Son is given by the Father to be the head of the church. Therefore, He desires to have His body joined up into one. To be made Head of the church was a privilege given to the Son by the Father, and the desire of the Son is to gather the church together about Him.

But the divine nature within the Christian, spoken of in 2 Peter 1.4, "breathes after such a fellowship".<sup>397</sup> Given that human beings are by nature social creatures, a saint is more so. It was not good for Adam to be alone, nor

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<sup>395</sup> Vol.11, p. 286

<sup>396</sup> It is not as if the divine nature has a desire apart from the desires of the three persons. The communion of the three persons is the divine nature.

<sup>397</sup> Vol.11, p. 287

is it good for the inhabitants of the New Creation to be alone. It is the spiritual instinct of the regenerate to associate together, because the Spirit is the Creator of the New Creation. Fellowship is most associated with the Spirit (as grace is with the Son, and love is with the Father), and the human community formed of those who have been born of the Holy Spirit, is supremely the community of fellowship, the community whose nature and instinct is to be in fellowship.

Goodwin's general definition of this association, called a church, is "an assembly of saints, of believers, of men called". This provisional definition is so refreshingly broad and simple compared to the exclusive definitions put forward by the early separatist puritans.

A church has to be an assembly of many united together. If only one man had been saved then there could not have been a church. On the other hand the many must be united in one or else there is a confused crowd. It is a holy congregation because the saving call is "an holy calling" 2 Timothy 1.9. Yet, the purpose of this company is to have fellowship with Christ and can therefore be called the fullness of Christ in Ephesians 1.23. This fellowship, both with Christ and the saints is spiritual - "And as reason only fits us to have fellowship with men, so grace only qualifies us to have communion with saints and Christ. A fellowship is of those who are alike in nature and disposition. Thus God would not have Adam joined in fellowship with beasts, and therefore made a woman for him, as a meet companion".<sup>398</sup>

A local church is a company and assembly of saints united together. In the same way, the church mystical is the general company of all saints united

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<sup>398</sup> Vol.11, p. 288

in Christ to Him, and one to another. A local church may be formed on earth by a particular group of Christians gathering together, but it is instituted by the special covenant of Christ who brings it into union with Him.

And because there is the same reason every way of the body mystical, and of the body instituted, therefore the same privileges every way which appertain to the whole body mystical do belong also as fully to every such particular church, so as indeed they are one; that is, there is *unica et eadem ratio*, one and the same consideration of the one and the other.<sup>399</sup>

Just as every drop of water has the same properties as an ocean of water, so each local church has the properties, privileges and powers of the mystical church universal.

So, the particular churches become an instance of realized eschatology, in that a judgement is set up now, in advance of the Judgement Day. A person's spiritual welfare may be assessed according to their standing with respect to the congregation of the people joined in the name of Christ.

However, there are vital differences between the church considered as a particular church and the church considered as the mystical, universal church. The local instituted church can only extend to "so many as can all hear and edify one another, etc., and who may, from the same pastor, receive the Holy Ghost, and the same provocation of grace at the same time".<sup>400</sup>

The local church must be seen as a company of saints:-

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<sup>399</sup> Vol.11, p. 289

<sup>400</sup> Vol.11, p. 292



Now wicked men are no more fit matter nor no more capable of the spiritual ends of a congregation, than the body of a beast is fit for a reasonable soul to dwell in, and inform, and use to actions reasonable. For the ends of this body of a church, and of this holy society, and of every member of it, is to edify one another, and every point is to supply grace to it. Ephesians 6.16. And for that men must have received the Spirit, and some spiritual gift. Therefore, those who have not the Spirit of Christ, and have no spiritual gifts and graces, have but the spirit of this world, and are unfit, and will be so far from edifying the church that (as Solomon says, Eccles 9.18) 'One sinner will destroy much good'.<sup>401</sup>

So, the goal of the local church is to be composed only of Spirit-filled saints, just as the mystical church is. However, it is not always possible to ensure this exact similarity.

The institution of the local church is of God, according to His laws, but the assembling of a local church together is an act of humanity. This same problem, of course, occurs with the ordination of ministers. The spiritual human judges everything (1 Corinthians 2.14) but this judging is not always infallible, so in a congregation of any kind of size hypocrites will be found amongst the true saints.

But still, though these saints may be deceived in the application of the rule, yet they are to hold fast the rule itself, that saints only are fit matter for a church, and that such only are to be admitted, though they who have the power of receiving them are often mistaken; yea, though temporary believers any be found in the church without a wedding garment, yet to them in the church they are as saints, and justified as such, being not known to be otherwise.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> Vol.11, pp. 293-294

<sup>402</sup> Vol.11, p. 294

No-one must be admitted to the church who the members are not wholly convinced is a true saint, so that as far as the local church is concerned the local church appears to its members to be "all holy, and justified, and elected, and sanctified".

So, the real difference between the visible and invisible church is that the invisible, mystical church can only be seen by God and it is, thus, entirely pure and undefiled. However, the visible church may contain defilement and hypocrisy because humans are only capable of judging the seen, the external. For the government of the visible churches, a visible true faith is necessary in its members.

Faith is called therefore, 2 Corinthians 9.13, a professed subjection to the to the gospel, but it must be a faith that is effectual to the acknowledging of such truths as are after godliness, Titus 1, Philemon 6, and so too effectual as to prevail in others that are saints to acknowledge every good thing in them ..... as hath the obedience of faith ..... as hath a professed subjection to the gospel in the whole man ..... Now to profess in words and deny in deeds is the greatest lie that is, 1 John 1.6.<sup>403</sup>

Goodwin's vision of the church is strongly contrasted with Richard Hooker's ecclesiology, who deliberately defines the visible church as a mixed body where a professed belief is the only qualifying condition.

Next Goodwin starts to pull together the two threads of his ecclesiology and his Pneumatology in a statement of life in the church.

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<sup>403</sup> Vol.11, p. 295

As the church mystical is a company knit and united together into one body to fellowship with Christ, and one with another by the Spirit, so also is a church instituted to be.<sup>404</sup>

Goodwin is not content to locate all his spiritual reality in an other-worldly, Platonic mystical church. The visible, concrete, particular church fellowship is what it is because of the mystical church, and it shares the same nature and attributes. The mystical church becomes the fundamental reality for the instituted local church, such that it both controls and defines the self-understanding of the churches of Christ on earth.

The church mystical is the one body of Christ, yet in the same sense the local church is also the body of Christ. In Romans 12 vv 4-8 Paul describes the local church: "We being many are one body in Christ, and everyone members of one another". This must be a local instituted church because in verses 6-8 Paul describes "the offices and organs" of the body.

So, the churches are each to be a company united by the one Spirit. The church of the Ephesians was "built together by the Spirit into an habitation" (Ephesians 2.22). Ephesians 4.4 states that "there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called". Goodwin concludes from this that the oneness in the one Spirit that was the concrete experience of the Ephesian church exemplified the fact that the mystical church was one in the Spirit.

According to 1 Corinthians 12.12 "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, being made to drink into one Spirit". This notion is important for Goodwin's ecclesiology. It is the Spirit that forms the church into one body. It

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<sup>404</sup> Vol.11, p. 295

is the Spirit who builds the body of Christ that is the church. This theology runs in parallel to Goodwin's strong emphasis on Christ's dependence upon the Holy Spirit. It was the Holy Spirit who prepared the human body of Christ for the Son. It was Holy Spirit who formed this body, keeping it free from the pollution of sin. In the same way it is the Holy Spirit who forms up the Body of Christ, the church, keeping it pure from all sinful corruption.<sup>405</sup>

The mystical body of Christ that is the complete fullness of all the saints is formed in absolute purity in the Holy Spirit, but the instituted church, endangered as it is by hypocrisy, is also constituted by the one Spirit. The churches must be formed in and by the One Holy Spirit because their purpose is to have fellowship with Christ, their Head (1 Corinthians 1.2; Philippians 1.1,2).

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<sup>405</sup> This is why Goodwin needs to have a mystical Body as well as the visible Body. The visible Body is subject to corruption and sin, but the mystical Body is pure from every possible corruption or sin. This is a way of grasping the notion of being sinful and righteous at once. The unspotted bride is not a future form of the heavily spotted historical and earthly church. The bride of Christ really does exist now, but then where is she? The bride of Christ cannot be the same as the people who are on the membership roll of a church, not least because many house churches do not have any membership roll. Nor can she be those who merely name the name of Christ, because Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons do that. Where or what then is the Church of Christ? The Puritans tended to use the notion of the invisible, mystical church to enable ecclesiological discussion to proceed without becoming lost in the impenetrable mist of finding a precise connection between the churches on earth in all their multifarious forms and quality, and the unspotted bride of Christ that is His Body. The Puritans do not deny the reality of the Incarnation by doing this. It is one thing to affirm the fallibility and peccability of Jesus of Nazareth, but it is a totally different thing to talk of His sinfulness and error. The pure, mystical Body of Christ is utterly dependent upon the Holy Spirit to keep it so, as Jesus was utterly dependent upon the Spirit to keep Him sinless. The visible churches are not only fallible and peccable, but are, in fact, sinful and erroneous.

There is a vital difference between the church mystical and the church instituted with respect to the knitting together of the members. The union of the church mystical is internal, simply by the communication of the Spirit, by the commission of the same faith and love, having the same Spirit that dwells in Christ and all His members. However, the union of an instituted church is more special, particular and distinct, therefore it is founded upon a more particular, external basis. Acts 2.44 shows that it involves the gathering together in one place together in the name of Christ.

As coming together and cohabitation is necessary to a married condition, so it is to this; though indeed it does not cease to be a church if dispersed, or any member to be a member if severed a while, ..... And because this church relation is ordained for coming together, therefore if any forsake the assembling together, it doth unchurch them, Hebrews 10.25.<sup>406</sup>

Being gathered together in the name of Christ is the *raison d'être* for the instituted church. The churches exalt the name of Christ as they participate in His ordinances - *finis in moralibus idem quod forma in naturalibus* (the end of moral things is the same as the form in natural things). The saints of a locality are to be united together for worship in a constant regular way. However, "it is not every sudden meeting that makes a church, as to pray, fast etc. For they are to be compact together Ephesians 4.16; it is an united company of brethren, that must 'dwell together in unity' ..... A church is an abiding place, not a tent for a night; and in that he says they were not only an habitation, but that they dwelt together".<sup>407</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> Vol.11, p. 296

<sup>407</sup> Vol.11, p. 297

[A]s the relation which faith internal works between us and Christ, is the form of the church mystical, so the special relation to Christ and to one another, to enjoy all Christ's ordinances, goes to make up the form of the church instituted. This relation, a covenant formally and expressly works, and constant meeting with such an intention really and virtually makes.<sup>408</sup>

Particularly in the early Luther, there is an unwillingness to identify the circumference of the church in any way at all, instead the focus is upon the Christological centre of the Gospel of Jesus Christ set out in the preached Word. Goodwin, too, seems much more happy to define the centre rather than the circumference of the local church. The local church exists as the people who gather "to enjoy Christ's ordinances". It is not the Christians who live in an area whether they meet together or not, nor is it simply Christians meeting together. The local church is formed when those Christians decide to meet together, as a body, around the instituted ordinances of Christ in the Spirit. Then, a church actually comes into existence. This understanding of the church as the creature of God, formed around Word and Sacrament, is straight from the heart of Luther. Of course, it is Barth who takes this theme to a new conclusion in his definition of the community of the church as an event.

The Word of God is the speech, the act, the mystery of God, and so not a substance immanent in the church apart from the event of its being spoken and believed, or discoverable and demonstrable in her. Therefore, even the church is not constantly, continuously the church of Jesus Christ, but such she is in the event of the Word of God being spoken to her and believed by her.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>408</sup> Vol.11, p. 297

<sup>409</sup> CD 1/1, p. 299. Goodwin cannot go this far with Barth, because Barth has lost the concrete, instituted character of the local church. Goodwin has the radicals looking over his shoulder and he has constantly to emphasize the

Colm O'Grady, in his two volume work on the doctrine of the church in Barth's theology, notes that for Barth, "the community is an assembly which comes into existence in response to a call, in a definite place, and as a community, that is, sharing a common interest which binds them together as a unity. Basically, however, the words *ecclesia*, *congregation*, *evocatio*, *communio sanctorum* are the description of an event. These terms do not describe something static and institutional. They describe a history in which He who assembles the community, and the community assembled by Him are both actively at work".<sup>410</sup> For Barth the church is not to be seen in the visible organizational structures and church officers. However, neither must the church be simply equated with some invisible reality underlying the external structures and offices. The church is a history. A history of the grace of God occurring in a gathered community. "In the world it can never be anything else but an *eglise du desert*, a 'moving tent' like the biblical tabernacle. But it really lives by the awakening power of the Holy Spirit, and in the long run will prove to be the best church even on the visibility of its history".<sup>411</sup>

More recently Colin Gunton, in the 1988 Congregational Lecture, defined the church as a constant reconstruction of the community by the Holy Spirit as new members are added - "For the church to be the church it has constantly to be constituted anew: and it is the work of the Holy Spirit to achieve that constitution; to make it ever again the people of God and body of Christ as he calls into it new members. So it is with the Lord's Supper. The

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fixed, enduring, formal, instituted character of the local church. Nevertheless, Goodwin is strongly against any kind of uncritical association between a historical 'church' and the reality of the gathered community in the Spirit.

<sup>410</sup> Colm O'Grady, The Church in the Theology of Karl Barth, Vol.1, p. 250-

<sup>251</sup>

<sup>411</sup> Ibid. p. 258

Lord's Supper and the koinonia of the body of Christ take place as the Spirit constitutes the Church around the table of the Lord".<sup>412</sup>

Goodwin's ecclesiology cannot go so far in that direction, even though his Pneumatology is so well-developed. Goodwin sees the work of the Spirit as the building up of the Church community and not merely constituting the church community. The plans of the building have been drawn up by the incarnate Christ - (but remember that for Goodwin even such ecclesiological teaching was given by the infallible inspiration of the Spirit) - and it is the work of the Spirit to construct each local church according to those plans. The community is built up and constituted actually in and through the planned structures of church officers and ordinances. Goodwin resists the tendency of the radical, anabaptist Puritans, who associate all concrete, enduring church structures with this-worldly unspirituality. Goodwin cannot do this, so he locates the work of the Spirit in the very structures and activities of the congregational church, so long as these structures and activities conform to the Word of God. Only a Congregationalist can safely do this, because only a Congregationalist can guard against simply baptizing the history of the church as the history of the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit. It must be remembered that Goodwin leaves it to Christ to sovereignly govern the local churches in the ultimate sense, through the work of the Spirit. A congregation that departs from the apostolic tradition cannot claim the Spirit by right and Christ has the power to excommunicate a diseased member. The Presbyterian, Anglican and Roman catholic ecclesiologies have rendered themselves incapable of talking about a rejected, excommunicated church, and thus are unable to safely speak about the close relationship between the

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<sup>412</sup> C.E. Gunton, The Transcendent Lord, Congregational Lecture 1988, p. 16



Spirit and the ecclesiastical ordinances and structures given by Christ. If local saints, in obedience, gather in the name of Christ, organizing themselves according to the divinely instituted structures given in Scripture, then the Holy Spirit will own that gathering, building it up into the community of the church. This local church is then an enduring, constant community in the One Spirit, unless it abandons the plans of the building that Christ gave in His teaching, which we can observe being implemented in the apostolic church.

For indeed, as the relation which faith internal works between us and Christ, is the form of the church mystical, so the special relation to Christ and to one another, to enjoy all Christ's ordinances, goes to make up the form of the church instituted.<sup>413</sup>

The ordering of the body then is vital to the gathering of the saints, because it is this very ordering which guarantees them to be the Body of Christ. This ordering has several vital aspects:

1. An enjoyment of all ordinances instituted by Christ, according to Christ's laws. For Goodwin it is essential for the church to get back to "the primitive true institution of the sacrament". In 1 Corinthians 11.23 Paul calls the Corinthians back to that which he had received of the Lord and had delivered to them.

2. "The order of a gospel church imports the ranking and ordering all their members into such proper offices, according to their gifts, that all those ordinances might be enjoyed, and all gifts among them, to the utmost, be improved to the use of the whole".<sup>414</sup> The local church is called the body of

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<sup>413</sup> Vol.11, p. 297

<sup>414</sup> Vol.11, p. 298

Christ not only because each member is made from the same flesh and nature - ("for all saints are flesh of Christ's flesh, and bone of his bone, as we say of those that are alike and akin") - but also because the members are joined together in a rightly, joined body. It is properly organized, not for the outward show of efficiency and order, but for the purpose of supplying true spiritual nourishment throughout the whole body.

3. Just as any human body is made up of a whole range of organs of varying sizes, so the local church body is made up of members of varying capacities, measures of gifts and graces, Ephesians 4.16. Just as the members of the church are so diverse in appearance and lifestyle, so the gifts of the Spirit are diverse, 1 Corinthians 12.4. "All the members for substance consist of the same similar parts, flesh, blood, veins, nerves, arteries, bones, which are alike in the hand and foot, but being variously ordered and tempered ....., in one there being more of nerves, in another more of flesh; in some there being one grace more eminent, as love, pity, etc., in others knowledge etc.; accordingly doth there arise a several gift out of the various composition and temperament of the same graces".<sup>415</sup>

The Spirit does not create giftings *ex nihilo*, that is, He does not grant church ministries to those who are not naturally suited to them. Yet, the gifts of the Spirit are not given in the work of salvation, rather they are given as "superadded habits infused by the Spirit".

4. Similarly, as the gifts are so diverse, so the offices, administrations and ordinances in the church are diverse. The gifts of the Spirit are given to answer to the variety of church offices and ordinances - "there being no gift

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<sup>415</sup> Vol.11, p. 298

but an office is appointed to exercise it; and an ordinance also is instituted, unto which both these gifts and offices serve". The gifts of the Holy Spirit do not militate against church structures. Quite the opposite. The gifts give the meaning and reality to the church structures. Without the Spirit giving gifts to the local community of saints, the structures would become mere form without content. It must never be lost sight of that for Goodwin the work of the Spirit in the local church is most clearly manifested by a strengthening and "actualizing" of the offices, the structures and the ordinances. He is wholly opposed to the "spiritualists" who rebel against structures as if those structures were some merely human creation that blocked the free operation of the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12.4,5 lists the diversity of gifts, so there is a diversity of offices or ministries to exercise them in. The rest of the members of the church are suited to being ministered to by those gifts through those ministries. Each ministry in the church is instituted or given by Christ and "gifted" by the Spirit according to the needs of the church. No part of the body can claim to have no need of any other part - "not so much as a little finger can be wanting".

5. Christ's ordering of the church sees to it that each of the offices and ministries is set into the right place within the overall church structure. "This is the order of the whole, and makes it a body, when the hand stands not where the eye should, nor the foot where the hand should".<sup>416</sup>

In the eschatological fullness of the Body of Christ there shall be no need of ordinances, nor of variety of gifts and offices because God will be all in all and there will be no need of any temple (Revelations 21.23).

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<sup>416</sup> Vol.11, p. 299

Goodwin makes the hermeneutical principle that whenever, in the New Testament, the church is spoken of we can be sure that it concerns the local, instituted church if there is discussion of the gifts and offices of the church. Using this principle Goodwin is able to make theological claims about the local church which go beyond many of the accepted claims of Puritan orthodoxy.

Both the church mystical and the church instituted exist so that the saints might have fellowship with Christ and with one another. Philippians 1.5.

In the mystical church the members have fellowship with Christ by duties of the first command, especially private prayer etc., but in an instituted church they have communion with him by duties of the second command, that as the church itself is an ordinance, so the means of fellowship in it are ordinances external also. Christ here communicates himself by public gifts and dispensations, by the offices of teachers, pastors, elders, and by sacraments, and by excommunication etc., and so by these ways too the members have fellowship with one another. By ordinances of the mystical church, as the members have common faith, so in immediate fruits of it, they have and may have a communion, as to love and shew effects of it by relieving, reproving etc.<sup>417</sup>

The fellowship of the Christian is made concrete and effective in the church instituted. The Eucharist, which is a 'communion of many made one body' (1 Corinthians 10.17), is the duty and privilege of the church instituted, as is excommunication and care for one another.

The Christian has a threefold communion:

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<sup>417</sup> Vol.11, p. 299. We have seen how this kind of commitment to mediated immediacy does not militate against the community of the church. In fact, Goodwin here shows how deeply committed he is to the communal experience of the immediate presence of Christ.

1. Personal, in secret duties; for example, John in Patmos had fellowship with the 3 persons of the Trinity. See also 1 John 1.3.

2. There is a mystical fellowship common to all saints such that a Christians has a bond of love in the shared mind and nature of being in Christ.

3. There is a communion of saints in an instituted church, which includes the other two kinds of fellowship and "some things be side".<sup>418</sup>

This is most important. Goodwin never ceases to emphasize the experiences of God a Christian may enjoy in private prayer and Bible study, when God the Holy Spirit directly illumines the heart and mind. Nevertheless, these experiences are not primarily individual and private. In fact, it is in the context of the instituted church that these blessings of the Spirit will normally be experienced. It is the local community of faith that is the rich, full place of Christian experience.

The communion of saints in a particular church has two basic goals in view: the mutual, edifying and building up of the saints; and the glory of God through Christ which is the final end of all church activity and being.

However, it is the Spirit that forms and constitutes this communion of saints whose purpose is the glory of the Father through Christ.

This fellowship of saints in a church is all 'through the Spirit', Ephesians 2.22, 'built through the Spirit'. 1. It is the Spirit makes them saints, and so fit matter for this building; 2. it is the Spirit,

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<sup>418</sup> Vol.11, p. 300

and not man, that makes them willing, and moves their hearts to join in this ordinance; 3. it is the Spirit that gives all the gifts that are in the members; 4. it is the Spirit that is the energy (as the Word is, Ephesians 4.16) through which every part supplies nourishment to others.<sup>419</sup>

Goodwin does not deny the transcendence of the Spirit in all this. The Spirit does not become some institutional force in the human institution we may call the church. He is free to build, empower or desert as He wishes. It is the Spirit who takes hold of fallen humans and recreates them into holy children of God, suitable material for the spiritual community of the church of Christ. It is the Holy Spirit who makes sin-crippled humans desire the worship of God in an instituted community of faith. Any merely human arrangement would be powerless because it could not be authorized with the divine power of institution. It is the Holy Spirit who makes the people of God willing and eager to gather themselves according to Christ's institution and ordinances. The gifts of grace (over and above the gift of grace which is salvation) which underlie and make possible the various instituted offices and ordinances are all distributed by the Holy Spirit as He builds the community. Even when Goodwin can describe the Spirit as "that energy ..... through which every part supplies nourishment to others", he is not buying into an immanentistic, impersonal Pneumatology. Goodwin is using the metaphor of energy supporting and nourishing any living body to describe the sanctifying work of the Spirit in and through the local body of Christ. It is the transcendence of the Spirit that guarantees the personalism in Goodwin's theology.

As he develops his thought Goodwin tries out several different definitions of a true gospel church.

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<sup>419</sup> Vol.11, p. 301

It is a company of saints assembling together in one place, built by a special covenant into one distinct body which, as occasion is, is to be fitly ordered to enjoy constant fellowship with Christ in all his way and ordinances, to their own mutual edification, and the glory of God through the Spirit.<sup>420</sup>

Nevertheless on the question of the marks of the true church, Goodwin believes that visible obedience to Christ is the only true matter of this instituted church: "..... a true profession of this is the only true adequate note of the matter of it". The special relationship to Christ and one another under that common faith is the true form of a church. But the "order and right administration of the ordinances and disposing of members is the *forma externa*, the external form of this body; the blessed Spirit, that acts and breathes in all, is the *forma assistens*, the assistant form; and their own edification and God's glory, through Christ their head, is the final cause of this particular visible instituted church".<sup>421</sup>

So how does one of these particular, visible, instituted churches come into existence? Goodwin, on the basis of Matthew 18 concludes that the clergy do not form churches. Rather Christ has given the freedom and power to His saints "to embody them selves into congregational churches ..... Two or three saints have an immediate power from Christ to begin this fellowship".<sup>422</sup> Because of the work of the Spirit in salvation, Christians share in the divine nature and desire to gather in local fellowships. The power to do this comes from Christ himself and does not derive from any other power whatsoever. "Christian magistrates have no more power herein than heathen magistrates, for his conversion increaseth not his power, but sanctifieth it; and therefore not

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<sup>420</sup> Vol.11, p. 301

<sup>421</sup> Vol.11, p. 302

<sup>422</sup> Vol.11, pp. 302-303

as Christian magistrates are we to expect their leave if we have immediate power from Christ".<sup>423</sup>

Under the gospel, Christians have the freedom to set up churches anywhere and are free to join with whom they please. Thus, even though the Anglican church is a true church, yet if a Christian cannot be true to his conscience in an Anglican church he is quite free to join or set up (with others) a Congregational church.

Goodwin believes that because church discipline is not properly exercised in the Anglican churches, according to Paul's instructions to Timothy (e.g. 2 Timothy 3.5), there is a duty not to join with such churches. This does not mean they are not churches, but that they are not churches of any use to Goodwin. He would allow a certain amount of fellowship with such churches, but strongly believes that there is a urgent need of rebuilding. Towards the end of Vol.9 Goodwin sets down carefully what he means by the gathering of a church out of other churches. "It is not a separation as from no churches, but a secession as from such churches as we cannot, as our judgement stands, with a good conscience continue members in..... This is not to set up one church against another, *altare versus altare*,... but one sister church by another, as the Dutch and French churches in England are".<sup>424</sup>

## 6. Word and Sacrament: the Trinity and Church Offices

Church officers are necessary for church life, because it is in the Word and Sacraments that the Christians are built up. The Word and Sacraments

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<sup>423</sup> Vol.11, p. 306

<sup>424</sup> Vol.9, p. 463



are powerless unless they are administered according to the divine institution, and such proper administration requires church officers.

The partaking of the Holy Ghost is especially in baptism and the Sacraments, and he usually is poured forth more abundantly at the Sacrament. This establishment of officers in a church is not indeed necessary and fundamental to the personal salvation of a Christian, yet unto the building of them up, which is as necessary as conversion.<sup>425</sup>

Nevertheless, it is not the sole work of the Holy Spirit, because it is a shared work of the Trinity.

We count it a great concurrent dispensation of God, that each person in the Trinity should share the works of our salvation among them, and it is a wonderful thing to bless them for it; but seldom have the three persons concurred in one action. When Christ was baptized, and God himself proclaimed, "Thou art my Son", there were all three persons.... And here is another *theophania*, an appearance of God in three persons, at the ordination of a minister.<sup>426</sup>

The church officers and the gifts that underlie these offices are "the joint and distinct work of all three persons" of the Trinity. Each has a part in planning and executing these matters for the church. Father, Son and Holy Spirit all work together in the making and ordaining of church officers, each person making a distinct contribution. "These three persons are the three great officers in our salvation, and these officers in his church are the lesser; Christ is the chief pastor, they the inferior under him, 1 Peter 5, and so are co-workers with the Trinity".<sup>427</sup>

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<sup>425</sup> Vol.11, p. 309

<sup>426</sup> Vol.11, p. 351

<sup>427</sup> Vol.11, p. 310

Christ bequeathed these gifts of church officers to the church at his ascension (Ephesians 4.11): apostles, pastors, and teachers. It is not the abilities that these individuals have, but the offices themselves that are Christ's gift. Church officers are such a high privilege "and next to God's Son and Spirit, these are the greatest gifts, because conveyers of both to us ..... When Christ ascended, he gave these gifts, that by their ministry he might dwell in their hearts by faith more, and also by his Spirit".<sup>428</sup>

Commenting on 1 Corinthians 12.4-6, Goodwin notes that the Spirit is the author of all the charismatic diversity of gifts (v 4); the Father is the author of the various workings of these gifts (v 6) and it is the Lord Christ who is the author of all the administrations of offices in the church (v 50).

Given that the source of these gifts is the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, it is a terrible neglect of the divine Persons to fail to receive the benefits of these gifts.<sup>429</sup>

Goodwin is thoroughly opposed to the radical Puritans who see the church as a pneumatic community of spontaneous ministry, governed only by the invisible, mysterious, unpredictable working of the Spirit. Goodwin argues that God is more careful than this and that He does not like His children to get too carried away in extemporary ministry. God prefers his children to have the finest spiritual food that has been carefully prepared by men dedicated to His service.

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<sup>428</sup> Vol.11, p. 310

<sup>429</sup> Vol.11, p. 358

If someone believes they can establish a new church office they must be able to provide a new spiritual gift to justify the office and to ensure the correct, successful working of the new spiritual gift in the churches. Christ is the Lord over His church and it is for Him to organize His house as He wishes. The way the saints are to govern themselves in the household of God is not a petty matter, but of decisive importance.

Just as the synagogues had more than one elder, so the churches must have a plurality of elders. Acts 14.22: "he ordained elders in every church". However, elders are not the only church officer. According to Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12 and 13 there are a number of church offices. Not all these ministries are still in operation today though. How may we distinguish which are for the church today and which have ceased? Goodwin employs the rather question begging method that has always proved popular in American Calvinist theology (see B. B. Warfield Counterfeit Miracles for a particularly clear example), of saying that the extraordinary gifts/offices, that is, the ones for the apostolic church only, are the ones that we no longer have, and the ordinary ones, the ones for church life today, are the ones we still have! This seems to simply endorse whatever one's current experience of church life happens to be, being a wholly undiscerning definition.

Nevertheless, Goodwin moves on to define the work of a church officer - "he is a servant of the whole, separated to some special work, with special authority in the name of the whole".<sup>430</sup> Each church officer has different gifts and different responsibilities and powers - "And the reason why God hath many, and those distributed offices severally, and a several part to be performed by them, is because God would have no one do all, but keep all in

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<sup>430</sup> Vol.11, p. 321

sobriety (seeing he hath but his measure), and in mutual ease and charity, that (as I Corinthians 12) one member should not say to another, what need have I of thee? That all might both partake and communicate".<sup>431</sup>

The vital need for church members not to be simply passive observers of a separated clergy who perform the activities of the church, is often proclaimed as a great ecclesiological discovery of the 20th century, but such comments merely show a lack of awareness of these early Congregational thinkers.

However, each church officer must stick carefully to the task and responsibilities given to him, not straying into the ministry of another member of the fellowship; "or, as Paul saith, 2 Corinthians 10.1, not to stretch a man's self beyond his own measure, not into another man's line, nor to thrust his sickle into another man's harvest".<sup>432</sup> Congregationalism, so Goodwin believes, is the best defence against ecclesiastical haughtiness. It is God that guides and gives the gifts. No one has all the gifts and no-one has any one gift in all its fullness. Others have gifts that are equally necessary for the functioning of the body.

The church officers are basically divided into 2 ranks: those who minister the Word, and those who deal with discipline, ruling the members' lives and bodies.

The first rank can be designated 'prophecy'. The apostolic church's extraordinary prophets who "assisted infallibly by the Holy Ghost in their

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<sup>431</sup> Vol.11, p. 322

<sup>432</sup> Vol.11, p. 325

prophesyings, need not to be regulated by no more than apostles themselves, the revelation of the Spirit being an infallible guide and rule unto them".<sup>433</sup> However, such prophets are not part of the Church today. Rather 'prophecy' refers to the ministry of the Word.

So the pastors and teachers, governed by the *analogia fidei*, minister the Word to the church, caring for the spiritual state of the members. Under the other rank, designated *diakonia*, Goodwin lists three church offices: deacon, ruling elder and widow.

The pastors and teachers are of equal rank, yet they differ in the way in which they minister practical theology. The pastor cares for the consciences of the members, guiding them in living spiritual and holy lives. The teacher instructs the flock in doctrinal matters, caring for the minds of the members, seeing to it that they do not fall into error. The teacher is concerned with systematic theology, in that he gathers the truths of Scripture together in a coherent form.

However, in the other rank of church officers the deacon is subordinate to the ruling elder, and the widow is lowest of all. This subordination is not because of a derivation of power, as civil officers derived their power from the king. Every officer receives their authority immediately from Christ. This subordination is "in respect of subjection to the jurisdiction of the superior".<sup>434</sup> The work of the widow is no less honourable than any other officer, there being no hierarchy of honour amongst the officers. However, the hierarchy is based upon the fact that the pastor and teacher have, all the power that the

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<sup>433</sup> Vol.11, p. 330

<sup>434</sup> Vol.11, p. 334

other officers have and more. The ruling elder has the power of the deacons and widows, plus more of his own, and so on. Goodwin has to arrive at these conclusions because of the way the church officers are described in the New Testament epistles. For example, in 1 Timothy 5.17 it says "the elders that rule are worthy of double honour, but especially those that labour in the Word and doctrine". Because Paul has described the ruling elder here as ministering the Word, Goodwin has to conclude that it is really the pastors and teachers that are spoken of, but under the title of elder, because that is the level of jurisdiction that Paul focuses on. Thus, if Goodwin mentions the work of a deacon, this would also include the elders, pastors and teachers in so far as they also possess the power of a deacon.

Both the pastor and the teacher may administer the sacraments because both have the same authority of the ministering of the Word. Yet they are different in their mode of operation: the pastor deals with the will and the affections, studying human behaviour so that he will be able to fit the teaching of the Bible to his people. He is concerned with practice and guarding his people against sin.

The teacher deals with the intellect and understanding, bringing the system of Biblical truth out through careful study of the text. He is concerned with points of faith, showing the people what to believe rather than what to do.

As to this difference between pastor and teacher Goodwin notes that "the papists did observe this difference of gifts, as is evident in their comparing Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure together: *Thomas intellectu emineuit, Bonaventura affectu splenduit*".<sup>435</sup>

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<sup>435</sup> Vol.11, p. 341

This distribution of church offices encompasses all the offices of Christ: the pastor represents Christ as priest; the teacher represents Christ as prophet; and the ruling elder represents Christ as king. The Spirit anointed Jesus to be the Christ in His various offices, so now the Body of Christ is anointed in the same offices. Goodwin is not at all afraid of levels of authority within the church in the way that some theologians seem to be today. Authority used in the context of mutual service and submission is free of all the problems of domination that plague unredeemed society. 'Sub-mission' expresses the whole purpose of the gifts/offices bestowed by the Spirit: putting the work of the local fellowship, the needs of the others, before one's own needs/desires/goals.

Goodwin claims that Scripture sets it down clearly that there is a special blessing from God upon all gatherings of his people as a church. Citing Acts ch2:1 Goodwin shows that

there was fulfilled the prophecies of Joel, in pouring out the Spirit of God upon them, which inwardly united them together. And Jesus Christ his presence was amongst them; and he being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, was in the midst of them. And he being the High Priest of the New Testament, Heb iii.1, God hath anointed him, of which anointing we have all participated, Acts iv. ver.27.<sup>436</sup>

Because Goodwin holds, albeit only economically, to the Filioque he always sees the work of the Spirit with reference to the Person and Work of Christ. Here we see that it is because of a church's solidarity in and with

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<sup>436</sup> Vol.11, p. 345

Christ that it receives the same anointing that He received, that is to say, that the work of the Spirit proceeds from the Son to the redeemed community. If Christ is seen as the nexus point of the relationship between God and the world, then it is precisely the Spirit's procession from Christ that gives the Spirit freedom and space in which to work.

## 7. Sharing the Christian Life with the Fellowship

Goodwin is very keen to show the vital, intimate communion of the saints in a local church. This communion is not just a casual, general social intercourse, but a fixed, personal communion where the saints seek to know one another's "cases and spirits, and to provoke one another to love, and to good works".<sup>437</sup> There should be meetings where the members can share their experiences and developments in grace. This is strikingly like the experience meetings that were the very foundation of the early Methodist societies.<sup>438</sup>

The members should disclose their spiritual needs and wants to a trusted fellow Christian, but this need not be the minister. Confessing faults to one another is not a general matter, as many radical Protestant groups have treated it, having large meetings where the members stand up to make public confession of personal sins. Goodwin takes such confession to be between a couple of mutually trusting believers, who pray for one another, seeking to build one another up in the faith. H. Snyder has shown that this kind of ecclesiology, when implemented in the very concrete and genuine way of the early Methodists, will ensure that there is a mutual interdependence among

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<sup>437</sup> Vol.11, p. 353

<sup>438</sup> See William Williams on The Experience Meeting (London, 1965)



the members.<sup>439</sup> Goodwin makes this point by saying that "there is then no member in a church but what is necessary and helpful, and no one can say that he hath no need of another".<sup>440</sup>

Of course, the church officers having a special care for the church members, are wholly given over to that work, and have charge over the whole body, "which is not incumbent on the private brethren". The work of the church officers does not make this private care unnecessary, however, because "there are such gifts as are necessary to communicate, and make known our graces one to another, as to be able to express what experiences of God's love etc., we have had; for, as the thoughts of our minds cannot be known unless we have a tongue to express them, so neither can our graces be known without such a gift. Now the end of this communion of saints, whereof I now discourse, is not to make known such gifts, but to communicate experiences, not to repeat sermons (which is a duty proper to families), but to declare what it was in a sermon that God blessed to them, and that affected their hearts".<sup>441</sup>

Preaching is God's appointed means not only for the conversion of sinners, but also for the sanctification and building up of the people of God.

As God the Father appointed it, and God the Son prayed for it, so God the Holy Spirit is by promise and covenant engaged to accompany it with his blessing unto the seed for ever. Isaiah 59:21..... And therefore it is, that, 1 Cor ii.4, the preaching of the gospel is called the 'the demonstration of the Spirit'.<sup>442</sup>

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<sup>439</sup> See, for example, H. Snyder, The Radical Wesley (Illinois, 1980).

<sup>440</sup> Vol.11, p. 355

<sup>441</sup> Vol.11, p. 358

<sup>442</sup> Vol.11, p. 361

God does not do all this work immediately because He wants to show the great diversity of His modes of operation, and so that His work is hidden from the eyes of the undiscerning world ["For this work of conversion being the only standing miracle in the church (and indeed the greatest, and therefore all is summed up in it)"]. God has chosen His word to do this, because the preaching of the word seems to be the very weakest of all means and God desires to show His power and glory most in the weak things of the world. If God reveals Himself by preaching rather than visible manifestations there is no danger of idolatry corrupting the revelation. It is the hearing of the word rather than the reading of the word because God wants to save illiterate people too. In Deut. 5:25,26 when God did speak directly from heaven, the people could not stand it and requested a mediated preaching. So, God has trusted his treasure to be in earthen vessels, "not heavenly....., because we are not able to behold the angels".

Hearing the preaching in a spiritual and effectual way is far beyond the power of human flesh. Hearing the bare words and, in fact, coming to a theoretical understanding of the Divine disclosure is possible to mere flesh. However, the hearing of faith is a distinct work of the Holy Spirit upon the human listener.

All thy notions may lie as dry gunpowder barrelled up in thee; but what shall give fire to them, and inflame thy heart by them, but a being anew baptized with the Holy Ghost as with fire, and by his striking some spark and good motion in you? Now the Holy Ghost falls on men at these ordinances. Preaching is therefore called 'the ministration of the Spirit' 2 Cor. iii.<sup>443</sup>

Goodwin goes as far as to say that the same truths preached over and over could become new, more clear and distinct at each preaching to the hearer, in so far as the Holy Spirit grants this anointing to the hearers.

Though many promises belong to thee, and thou already knowest them, and distinctly rememberest them, and daily viewest them, yet thou mayest haply not have much peace from them; but when thou hearest them again delivered in this ordinance, thou mayest have such peace from them.<sup>444</sup>

Goodwin picks up a theme that can be found woven throughout the writings of various theologians throughout church history, for example, Augustine's third homily on the epistles of John:

The sound of our words strikes the ears, the Master is with in. Do not suppose that any man learns ought from man. We can admonish by the sound of our voice; if there be not One within that shall teach, vain is the noise we make. Aye, brethren, have ye a mind to know it? Have ye not all heard this discourse? and yet how many will go from this place untaught! I, for my part, have spoken to all; but they to whom that Unction within speaketh not, they whom the Holy Ghost within teacheth not, those go back untaught..... Where His inspiration and His unction is not, in vain do words make a noise from without.<sup>445</sup>

The comparison with Barth's actualism cannot be avoided, though the essential Pneumatology that must underlie Barth's theology is shown up clearer by both Goodwin and Augustine.

Because the preached word is of this character the church must not hoard the preaching of the minister to itself as if its sole use was the

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<sup>444</sup> Vol.11, p. 365

<sup>445</sup> Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Volume VII, p. 481

edification of the church. The fact that it is such a living and powerful word shows that it is for those that are outside the church fellowship, to awaken and enliven those who are dead in sin. Given the tremendous seriousness of this task, the minister must be separated to his task, free to give himself wholly to the study of the word. Again Goodwin emphasizes that God does not want *ex tempore* preaching going on in the churches. Just as universities have tutors and professors set aside to instruct the students, so "God hath taken the same care, he would not have his children read to *ex tempore*, but they have men that are as scribes, instructed in the law; and in a church, pastors and teachers are as tutors to their understanding and affections".<sup>446</sup>

The minister must, then, be properly prepared for the work of the ministry of the word. Goodwin attacks the ecclesiology of the radicals.

There is a generation of men that are against acquired knowledge, or that which is sought out by study, or received from others and would have all infused.<sup>447</sup>

Paul received his teaching by revelation, but the ordinary way is by instruction and teaching, which does not militate in any way against "knowing things by faith or experience". Even the authors of scripture, though guided infallibly by the Holy Spirit, still studied hard in the preparation of these writings. Even with reference to the considerations of Luke 21:14 Goodwin says "the Holy Ghost may be supposed to bring to remembrance things before considered in study and meditation, or reading, in order to doctrine and exhortation in public".<sup>448</sup> Thus, the preacher must have done all his study

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<sup>446</sup> Vol.11, p. 372

<sup>447</sup> Vol.11, p. 377

<sup>448</sup> Vol.11, p. 379

beforehand if he would expect the Spirit to help him in the delivery of his sermon.

In the same vein Goodwin argues against the church being split up into smaller groups that would meet for the Lord's Supper. All such tendencies are a move into the Brownist kind of ecclesiology, because for the true Congregational ecclesiology these sub-meetings could not be a meeting of the church as a church. Congregationalism is shown to be a definite middle way between the Brownists and the Presbyterians. Rejecting the super-church structures of Presbyterianism, the Congregationalists also rejected the informal lack of structure in the various radical groups who claimed a more immediate presence of the Holy Spirit. By keeping his Christology and Pneumatology in close connection Goodwin is able to steer between the Scylla of a Pneumatologically uninformed Christology in Presbyterianism and the Charybdis of an over-transcendent Christology, forcing a dangerously immanentist Pneumatology, in the radical groups. Goodwin's strong emphasis on the competency of the congregation to take responsibility for its life does not lead to an egalitarian ecclesiastical commune. While prepared to grant the ability to baptize to one who is not a minister if necessary, yet he is not prepared to extend this to the Lord's Supper and ordination. Similarly, Goodwin rejects any attempt to judge ministers with a more exacting code of behaviour than for ordinary private members: "you are to exercise the same patience towards an officer, as a officer, in matter of crime, that you are to use to a private member; and so you are not to disclaim him from being an officer on all lesser account than you would excommunicate him".<sup>449</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> Vol.11, p. 453

## 8. Conclusions

I argue that it is the developed Pneumatology of Goodwin that enabled him to see past some of the structural issues of ecclesiology to the more fundamental questions of the true nature of the church. Goodwin was never content to secure a mere correct form, and was wholly against structures which rose above the concrete life of the worshipping community. This was because it was the gifts of the Spirit underlying the church offices which gave them their reality and true context. These gifts were for the edification of the local body, and had no place in gatherings of ministers who called themselves to a non-congregational based level of church life. On the other hand the Spirit was not seen as some wild, undisciplined force that rushed mysteriously through informal gatherings of Christians, seizing upon who it would, imparting deep spiritual knowledge without study. Such an ecclesiology is anathema to Goodwin, who maintains a strong belief in the church order and discipline as instituted by Christ in the Bible. We conclude, then, with a quotation from Goodwin's Church Order Explained in a Way of Catechism on the subject of the office of deacon, which brings all these features out:

He must be full of the Holy Ghost, which implies, 1, that a man must be empty of his own spirit, for else he cannot be full of the Spirit of God.... 2. He must abound in all the gifts of God's grace; and not only be full of gifts, but of the Holy Ghost himself. For gifts will grow rusty, dead, powerless, and unprofitable, and we shall turn them to our own ends; but he must be full of the Spirit of God, to put life into all his graces... It is not his gifts, but his person, Rom. viii.11. It is not gifts that raised Christ from the dead, but the eternal Spirit. Now, then, the eternal Spirit of God must rest in the heart of a deacon. A deacon may be put to sudden expressions; and if he be not full of the Holy Ghost, he will not well rule his own gifts..... A man is then full of the Holy Ghost when he doth not content himself with gifts, that he hath a gift of prayer and edification, and a spirit of diligence, but

when he finds himself empty for all this, but as he continually desires fresh supply from the Holy Ghost. If in abundance of gifts I find myself empty, and I am sensible of my own unprofitableness and inability to do any good, then am I not only full of the gifts of God, but of the Holy Ghost, to carry them an-end with strength.....<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>450</sup> Vol.11, pp. 510-511

## Chapter 5 Conclusions

The Pneumatology of Thomas Goodwin represents an important contribution to the task of systematic theology. His Christocentric theological scheme is vitally enhanced by his strong Pneumatology. Goodwin is able to draw widely on theologians of the Early and Mediaeval periods, yet is firmly committed to a Calvinistic theology. This catholic spirit joined with deep convictions about Christian truth gives his work a position of enduring value to the Church.

In his doctrine of the Trinity Goodwin demonstrates the dependence of the Son upon the Spirit. In doing this Goodwin is picking up a theme that was explored in the theology of the Cappadocians, but had been neglected in the West. Whereas Owen held resolutely to the Filioque clause of the Creed, Goodwin, perhaps unselfconsciously, is more comfortable with an Eastern conception of the Trinity. The most valuable result of Goodwin's commitment to Christ's dependence on the Spirit is a thorough doctrine of the humanity of Christ. By emphasising the role of the Spirit in all aspects of the life of Christ, he is able to maintain the full integrity of both the humanity and divinity of Christ without letting them seep into one another.

Goodwin's epistemology is focused from the outset on the redeemed creation in Christ. Thus, he cannot allow his description of human life and knowing in the Edenic state to become a threat to the far greater state in Christ. By connecting the *Imago Dei* with the indwelling Spirit, Goodwin shows that even Adam was not an autonomous knower. Adam needed his reason to be informed and indwelt by the same Logos that formed all things. In the Calvinist tradition Goodwin sees the Fall as a complete ruination of



humanity, rather than a privation or injury. This forces him to develop a doctrine analogous to the Dutch idea of common grace to account for the successes enjoyed by humanity in sin. Throughout his epistemology Goodwin wants to overcome the dualism of nature and grace. He attempts this by swamping nature with grace. In Christ nature and grace, the visible and the invisible, are integrated in one realm of knowledge. The Bible, although comprehensible on one level, remains an essentially closed book to the unregenerate mind. Only one who experiences the reality of life in the Spirit is able to comprehend what the text is referring to. Christian knowing depends upon the Spirit within and not ultimately upon any methodology no matter how valuable such methodology might be. Thus, Christian assurance does not derive primarily from either self-examination or a logical syllogism, but by the direct testimony of the Spirit.

Having established such a strong division between the Christian and the non-Christian Goodwin's soteriology is similarly radical. Salvation is essentially about regeneration. Sin has caused an ontological corruption that needs a far more radical solution than mere forgiveness of sin. In fact, imputation of righteousness in a merely legal sense does not provide Goodwin with a sufficient answer to his profound doctrine of human sinfulness. Only when the Holy Spirit, by regeneration, applies Christ's active, passive and ontological righteousness to a believer are they freed from the condemnation of sin. By insisting upon the absolute quality of this change, and utterly rejecting any idea of process, Goodwin avoids the separation between the Spirit and Christ that has been a feature of Western theology.

Goodwin's ecclesiology is the foundation for Congregationalism. Because of his developed Pneumatology his ecclesiology is far more focused on the worshipping congregation than the strongly Christocentric ecclesiology

of Roman Catholicism. It is the Spirit who guarantees the reality of Church life, but not in a institutional sense. A body of people is only a true Church when the Spirit constitutes them as such. Christ, under the inspiration of the Spirit, established the rules and offices for Church government and in so far a gathering of believers is faithful to the teaching of Christ the Spirit is faithful in granting them the gifts and anointing they need.

In these topics Goodwin provides an integrated account of the Person and Work of the Spirit with the Person and Work of Christ. Speaking within the Puritan tradition he combines a commitment to the finished Work of the God-Man with a commitment to the ongoing perfecting Work of the Spirit. In this way he steers away from the heavily legal framework of the Presbyterian theologians at Westminster, and instead develops a more personalist account of the relationship between God and humanity.

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